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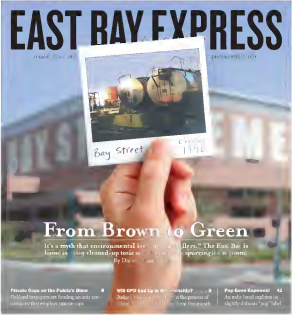

From Brown to Green

It's a myth that environmental la[illegible]llers." The East Bay is home to [illegible] cleaned-up toxic s[illegible] spurring [illegible]

By Da[illegible]

Private Cops on the Public's Dime 8
Oakland taxpayers are funding an anti-un[illegible] company that employs private cops

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Judge [illegible] the process of [illegible] ent this month

Pop Goes Kapowski 42
An indie band explains its slightly dubious "pop" label

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Americans Being Microwaved

The CIA recently admitted to crimes committed 50 years ago (such as giving LSD to unsuspecting victims thus causing suicides). Is it possible that in 50 years from now they'll admit to the crimes they are committing today. It is less likely though, because now everything is a "national security" secret and whistleblowing is outlawed.

Today there are a few people targeted by the government and it may be difficult to know why. They suffer greatly while in the midst of their fellow citizens and the causes of their pain are invisible to others. Nightly electromagnetic bombardments are used to deprive them from sleep. Tiny radio frequency ID microchips are used as homing devices for the purpose. Combined with the use of chemicals and tampering with food and medicines, life can be very unpleasant. The sleep deprivation is a form of torture that impairs judgment and functioning. Pervasive electronic surveillance, interception of mail and phone calls plus destruction of documentation are also part of the unseen repression. With computerized control and sensors, the harassment doesn't require a lot of human man hours.

Citizens in any country will never admit that their country has a secret police. Our secret police (FBI & CIA) is not as pervasive as those of other countries. Right now it only hostilely surveils (harasses) a few lone dissidents, critics, or eccentrics. But this bodes ill for the future of America. Targeted radicals may be slow to recognize what hits them. They'll speak their minds and then begin to suffer headaches and sleep problems. They may suspect but not blame the government because they can't visualize the technology used to cause the suffering. But they'll learn to avoid speaking out.

The result will be a subtle climate of fear, an acceptance of injustice, as America moves towards fascism. The intelligence community is a hidden power in America and sometimes the covert action, dirty tricks arm of the Republican right. The public naively trusts these agencies to obey the law and hopes the press will expose wrongdoing. But many people in government and media are subconsciously afraid of being attacked themselves.

"National security" is the excuse for the secrecy, hiding criminal acts is the reason for it. Congressional oversight is a joke. Legislators on intelligence committees just wait to be lied to.

Real terrorists are rare to nonexistent in this county so government agents have to make themselves feel busy experimenting on someone they don't like.

Despotism can have a long incubation period but the U.S. is infected. It starts with a small number of loners being attacked. Later the dissidents who are America's conscience will increasingly be destroyed. Edward Jimison is primary co-author of the book

The Great Repression

By Edward Jimison 2614 Castro Valley Blvd #4 Castro Valley CA

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On the Cover *Illustration by Brian Kelly*

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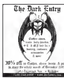

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NEWS & OPINION

EAST BAY EXPRESS
SHAPING AN ARTS EDUCATION

LETTERS

What's Gay Got to Do with It?

My wife and I are avid *Express* readers, in part because we enjoy playing a weekly game: "How did that typo/gaffe/ factual error get past the editor?" But a headline in last week's edition crossed the line from amusing to troubling. While reading "Gay Cop Accused of Discrimination," I scratched my head trying to figure out what on earth Chris Magnus' sexual orientation had to do with the story. Was Chief Magnus accused of discrimination against heterosexual employees? No. Were his accusers bringing up his sexual orientation as a point of contention? No. The only explanation John Geluardi gives for mentioning that Magnus is gay comes in the first two sentences, with an implied logic that is as simplistic as it is offensive: "Is ... Magnus a racist? He's white [and therefore, Geluardi implies, quite possibly a racist], but he's also openly gay [and therefore probably not a racist — because, of course, minorities can't be guilty of oppressing minorities]." Not only is it weak reasoning to use race and sexual orientation as predictors of racism, but calling out Magnus' sexual orientation in the headline distracts from the real story of whether Magnus has displayed racial/ethnic discrimination. Could you imagine publishing a story entitled "Straight mayor accused of mismanaging Occupy" or "White governor eliminates redevelopment"? I didn't think so.

Glenn Brown, Oakland

The Trial Is a Waste of Time

Shame on the plaintiffs and hurrah for Chris Magnus! If the plaintiffs have legitimate gripes, they might submit them to the *Express*. Otherwise, they should withdraw their suit and save Richmond the expense of a trial, although it sounds as though the plaintiffs would end up paying for it. They might want to think twice about paying such a foolishly unnecessary expense — even with their inflated salaries.

Ruby MacDonald, El Cerrito

Saddened — But Not Surprised

Well, well, isn't this shocking news. Trust me, I get zero satisfaction from saying "I told you so," but I did in fact tell you so. This very paper quoted me on this, after the city council approved what I knew was a flimsy temporary food pod ordinance. I think my quote was something along the lines of "it's a load of crap."

Now, only weeks after Councilwomen Rebecca Kaplan and Jane Brunner held their cute little press conference and mobile food party at City Hall and took their victory lap and all the credit for taming the awful beast and making the city safe for mobile food pods (albeit temporarily and with a lot of restrictions and cost-prohibitive measures), the one and only food pod in Oakland is squashed like a bug. Where the hell are Kaplan and Brunner now? Could it be that they are resting comfortably in their offices collecting their paychecks and pretending that this didn't happen?

The last time I checked, the formal process for shutting down a food pod, individual vendor, or other such activity is complaint-driven. If the city received a complaint, they would have to notify the property owner or event planner that a complaint was filed, and the Oakland Police Department would shut it down (refer to Eats On Broadway). It may very well be that a complaint was filed, but my spidey-senses tell me that complaints aren't driving this.

It's clear there's not a single council member nor anyone else in a position of authority who gives enough of a damn to do anything about any of this. Nobody seems to care that gobs and gobs of staff time (read: our tax money) has been spent over more than two years writing and re-writing, submitting and re-submitting proposals for expansion of the original mobile food ordinance.

I, for one, am sickened and appalled that Oakland squandered yet another opportunity to actually do something for community and economic development in this beleaguered city. Not surprised, but really, really over it.

Elizabeth August, Oakland
Formerly of Guerilla Grub

Awards

The *Express* won a first-place award in the 2011 Price Child Health and Welfare Journalism contest for the cover story "Pushing Foster Children off the Plank" by Angela Kilduff. The contest is sponsored by the Children's Advocacy Institute at UC San Diego's School of Law, which has been recognizing excellence in journalism since 1992. The *Express* was competing against weekly newspapers of all sizes. The *Los Angeles Times* won in the daily newspaper category and VoiceofSanDiego.org won for electronic media.

Also, the editorial cartoon "Down with Wall Street" by cartoonist Justin DeFreitas was included in the 2012 *Best Cartoons of the Year* anthology published by Pelican Books.

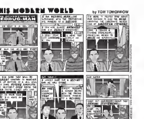
Corrections

The January 18 installment of Legalization Nation, "The Great Dispensary Freeze of 2012," erroneously stated that Oakland lawyer Robert Raich is a dispensary permit applicant. He is an advisor to the applicant.

In our January 11 Education and Careers story, "High Tech Ex'pression," we misspelled local DJ Bobby Parts's given name. It's Mike Molero.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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SEVEN DAYS

OBAMA IS SITTING PRETTY

Newt Gingrich's sudden rise to the top of the GOP primary battle has the Republican establishment in a near panic

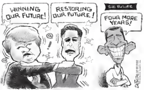
By Robert Gammon

One year ago, President Obama's reelection chances looked dim. Republicans were fresh off a sweeping victory in the 2010 midterm elections, and the possibility of retaking the White House had greatly energized the GOP base. But over the past few months, the odds of Obama winning a second term appear to have improved dramatically, especially in the past week as conservative voters in South Carolina rejected the Republican establishment candidate, Mitt Romney, and instead cast their ballots for former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, whom most political observers agree has almost no chance of defeating the president next November. And with Gingrich taking a nine-point lead in the Florida polls early this week, the GOP is digging in for a long, ugly battle that could last until the California primary in June.

The main problem for Republicans is that in a year in which they were supposed to have a legitimate shot at winning the White House, they've fielded perhaps the worst field of presidential candidates since 1964 — when Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater lost in a landslide to Democratic President Lyndon Johnson. Another problem is that the conservative base detests the establishment-anointed frontrunner Romney. The base gets it that Romney is a stiff, awkward phony who will say anything to get elected, and whose flip-flopping is legendary — from abortion (was for it before he was against it) to climate change (said it was real but now questions it) to the individual mandate (again, was for it before he was against it).

To the horror of deep-pocketed Republican donors who back Romney, Gingrich also has tapped into the resentment that conservative, blue-collar voters have toward the über wealthy ex-governor of Massachusetts. Indeed, Gingrich, as if channeling an inner Democrat, harangued Romney for his work at Bain Capital as being "exploitive" and "not defensible," because the corporate raiding firm made a fortune by buying up healthy American companies, stripping them of their assets, and firing all the workers. It was a line of attack that the president was expected to use against Romney this fall, and now if the ex-governor survives the rough-and-tumble GOP primaries, Obama will be able to argue that even Republicans find Romney's business record — which was his supposed strength — distasteful.

In fact, Romney's business background may now be his one of biggest liabilities. He's always been the candidate of the One Percent, but now rank-and-file conservative voters believe it too, thanks to Gingrich. Romney didn't help himself, of course, when he refused to release his tax returns until the early primaries were over, and then revealed that his effective income tax rate on his multimillion-dollar fortune is less than 14 percent, far lower than that of the vast majority of the American middle class. The Associated Press added fuel to the fire that Gingrich set by reporting late last week that Romney has been stashing his riches, up to $30 million, in offshore, tax haven accounts in the Cayman Islands.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DeFRANCE

Gingrich's love for the politics of destruction has shot him to the top of the polls. The only problem is: He appears to be unelectable. To start, his personal shortcomings are infamous. In 1997, he became the only speaker in the history of the House to be found guilty of ethics violations and was fined $300,000. There are also the stories of how he served his first two wives with divorce papers after they fell victim to serious illnesses. And then last week, his second wife went public on national TV, saying that Gingrich had asked her for an open marriage so that he could still keep seeing his then mistress (who became his third wife).

Gingrich's considerable baggage, coupled with his commanding victory in South Carolina, his lead in Florida, and his rise in the national Republican polls, has the GOP establishment in a near-state of panic. Major GOP funders know that Gingrich has astronomically high disapproval ratings — a whopping 60 percent among the general public, far higher than Obama's. Steve Schmidt, who was John McCain's 2008 campaign manager and a longtime Republican political operative, summed up the views of the GOP leadership in a recent interview with Rachel Maddow: "We're probably moving toward a declaration of war on Newt Gingrich by the Republican establishment. And if Newt Gingrich is able to win the Florida primary, you will see a panic and a meltdown of the Republican establishment that is beyond my ability to articulate in the English language. People will go crazy.

"I think everybody in the establishment Republican circles in Washington, DC is fixated on the numbers. ... Newt Gingrich has a 100 percent name ID, has a 60 percent national unfavorable number, and it's a number so high that with the 100 percent name ID it's impossible to come back from. You're not electable in a general election as a 2012 presidential election. If your unfavorable numbers are that high. Particularly against a president that, while vulnerable, is still a net positive in that number. So people look at Newt Gingrich and don't see him as a plausible candidate in the general election, so the Republican establishment who thinks that the president is vulnerable and beatable is going to begin to melt down if Gingrich's momentum continues."

But the Republican knife fight isn't just good for Obama. It has the Democratic Party suddenly believing that it can maintain the US Senate this year and also retake the House. Some Republicans think so too. "[T]he Republican Establishment fears Gingrich will cause them to lose the House and not get the Senate," conservative blogger and CNN pundit Erick Erickson wrote earlier this week. "Put another way, the current Republican leadership fears that the man who helped the GOP take back the House for the first time in forty years and his allies in the Tea Party who helped take back the House in 2010 will cause the GOP to now lose."

Three-Dot Roundup

Oakland Mayor Jean Quan and City Administrator Deanna Santana lowered the proposed number of city layoffs to the equivalent of 105 full-time employees as they scrambled to make nearly $30 million in budget cuts because of Governor Jerry Brown and the legislature's decision to kill redevelopment. ... Brown, meanwhile, said he opposes a bill that would extend the deadline for eliminating redevelopment from February 1 to April 15. "I don't think we can delay this funeral," he said. ... State Democratic legislators, however, are balking at Brown's proposal to shred California's social safety net in order to start paying down the wall of debt owed by the state government, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported. Brown is proposing to pay $6.5 billion of the debt next year — but in order to do it he's proposing to slash funding for social services by more than $2 billion. ... And Obama announced that his administration will block the controversial Keystone XL pipeline project — a move hailed by environmentalists. The pipeline would have expanded the extraction of dirty tar sands oil in Canada and was heavily supported by the oil industry and the GOP. Obama said his decision was prompted by a requirement from Congressional Republicans to rule on the pipeline's fate by February — a timeline that he said didn't provide enough opportunity to thoroughly study the issue. ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

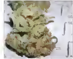
Robert.Gammon@EastBayExpress.com

LEGALIZATION NATION

WHAT THE FUNK?

Terpenes take off in labs, drug companies, and dispensaries.

By David Downs



OG Kush contains a mix of alpha-pinene, limonene and perhaps myrcene

Bay Area residents have yet another thing to be snobby about, as some knowledge of "terpenes" — the building blocks that make up the unique smell of cannabis — begin to waft into the mainstream. Drug companies are researching the therapeutic properties of these simple organic molecules, and at least two California medical cannabis labs have begun testing for their presence in dispensary weed. One lab in Davis even holds routine smelling classes.

Rick Pfrommer, manager at Harborside Health Center in Oakland, said that as head buyer for the popular dispensary he has smelled countless numbers of bags and glass jars full of the sticky ick and that a lot of the odors he detects aren't actually coming from the weed. "You can smell everything from bat guano to heavy salt hydroponic fertilizers," Pfrommer noted during an interview inside Harborside's buyer's room, which is dominated by the exam station counter, shelves of pot strain reference books, and expensive computers. Pfrommer has been selling ganja for about 25 years. "You can smell chlorophyll if a sample's not cured well. ... You can also smell molds.

"Once you've smelled multiple thousands of samples of cannabis, when something is off, it's apparent that it's off, like, as soon as you crack the bag open," he continued.

Like a wine sommelier or a buyer for a boutique coffee roaster, Pfrommer smells each potential new addition to Harborside's menu using a specific ritual. First, he pops open a glass jar of coffee beans and takes a big sniff. Like ginger before sushi, coffee beans reset the palate, he said. Then he takes a big whiff from a sample cannabis bag, fishes out a single nug, cracks it open, and inhales deeply. "All you really want to smell is the terpenes," he said.

According to Donald Land, a UC Davis chemistry professor who co-founded Halent Labs, which tests for terpenes and conducts occasional smelling classes, "Terpenes are a set of relatively simple organic molecules that are present in all living organisms, most of the flavors and aromas of plants comes from terpenes. The name 'terpene' is derived from the main ingredient in a certain type of pine pitch called turpentine. That piney smell that comes along with turpentine comes from terpenes. There are lots of others."

Herbalists have recognized the power of terpenes for decades. "Cannabis and other plants share a lot of the same terpenes, so terpenes have been legal for many decades," Land noted. "There's been quite a lot of research on them in the US and abroad, including many well-documented medicinal effects."

Damn you hippie aromatherapists. According to a literature review by the medical cannabis journal *O'Shaughnessy's*, limonene (also found in lemon) is an antidepressant and immune-stimulant in humans, alpha-pinene (also found in pine needles) is an anti-inflammatory, a bronchodilator, and a wide spectrum antibiotic; nerolidol (also found in oranges) is a sedative; linalool (also found in lavender) has an anti-anxiety effect; and myrcene (also found in hops) is a sedative, a muscle relaxant, a sleep aid, and an anti-inflammatory.

Trainers teach drug dogs to hunt for beta-caryophyllene, a terpene in cannabis that also is an anti-inflammatory. Terpenes are also the chemical precursors to the euphoric ingredient in pot, THC, making them a proxy for potency.

Researchers like Ethan Russo, senior medical director at GW Pharmaceuticals, believe that terpenes contribute to the "entourage effect" that lies at the core of medicinal cannabis' efficacy in treating nausea, inflammation, chronic pain, and more. GW Pharmaceuticals has started growing terpene-only pot — *sans* THC — to better investigate the effects of terpenes, *O'Shaughnessy's* reported. And, unlike the THC pill Marinol, new prescription throat spray Sativex contains THC, its therapeutic peer CBD, and terpenes.

Terpenes also enable pot snobs to make outlandish yet credible claims that they smell chocolate, orange, diesel, or lavender in their bag. The five to ten main terpenes in cannabis have about 25 more rare peers, but cannabis has been found to contain more than 200 different types of them. The combinations are infinite.

And the smells they create can have a big effect on medical cannabis users. "So many times smell has trumped appearance when somebody is making a choice about which cannabis to buy," said Pfrommer. "Somebody will smell a beautiful-looking sample and not like it at all, or they'll look at a sample that's not quite attractive and smell it and it's just, like, an instant hit."

Popular strain OG Kush contains a mix of alpha-pinene, limonene, and perhaps myrcene to create its trademark "lemon Pine-Sol funk," Pfrommer said. Jack Herer's beloved smell comes from sugary pine terpene called terpineol.

Cannabis lab data from Halent Labs and The Werc Shop near Los Angeles is helping to elevate breeding to a science. It's also giving patients a first-ever ingredients list for that dubious doobie, said Jeffrey Raber, director of The Werc Shop.

Pfrommer envisions legal OG Kush deodorizers or Agent Orange floor cleaners. "I think, along with CBD, terpenes are one of the two most exciting things going on in cannabis," Pfrommer said. "We're just scratching the surface now."

And sniffing. ■

David.Downs@gmail.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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FULL DISCLOSURE

PRIVATE COPS ON THE PUBLIC'S DIME

Oakland taxpayer money is being funneled to an anti-union company that employs private cops to patrol the downtown and Uptown areas

By Darwin BondGraham

Even as Oakland prepares to lay off more than one hundred city employees, the city will continue paying several hundred thousand dollars each year in taxpayer funds to two privately controlled — and politically influential — organizations that manage the downtown and Uptown areas, records show. Much of this public money, in turn, will be funneled to a powerful, private, Christian-based corporation that has a record of opposing unions. This company, Block by Block, a subsidiary of the Nashville-headquartered SMS Holdings, employs low-paid, private cops, known as "security ambassadors," and has been influencing Oakland law enforcement policies and procedures in the downtown area.

The City of Oakland's contributions of taxpayer dollars to the Downtown Oakland Association and Lake Merritt/Uptown District Association — both known as business improvement districts — represent significant financial commitments for the cash-strapped city. This year Oakland taxpayers must provide the Downtown Association with $109,904 because of assessments the association has levied on five city-owned properties in its boundaries, including City Hall. That's right. Oakland taxpayers must pay taxes on their primary municipal building to a private entity. Unlike other taxes, public properties are not exempt from business district assessments.

As Full Disclosure previously reported, the Downtown and Uptown business districts are controlled by representatives from big banks and corporations and large property owners that wield considerable influence over City Hall. The associations also applied intense pressure on Mayor Jean Quan last fall to order two major police raids on Occupy Oakland (see "The One Percent Solution," 11/16/2011).

Adding further costs to the city is the elimination of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency. It means that the city is now on the hook to pay assessments for four former Redevelopment Agency-owned properties in the downtown association's boundaries — costing the city more than $30,000 a year. According to the Downtown Association's own records, the largest single contributor to the district's budget is not a private landlord but rather the City of Oakland, which pays about 14 percent of the total.

The city is paying the Lake Merritt/Uptown District Association another $52,068 in public funds this year and is the sixth largest funder of the district. When the city council green lighted the creation of the Downtown and Uptown associations four years ago, staff members of the city's Community Economic Development Agency pegged the city's fiscal commitments over the ten-year lifespan of each district at $1.58 million and $560,000, respectively.

Staff characterized these obligations of public dollars as a "strategic and productive investment of public funds." But what are those funds helping to pay for?

According to the Downtown and Uptown associations' own documents, Block by Block's contract is one of the largest single expenditures for the business districts. According to the associations' joint 2009-2010 Annual Report to the city council, "Block by Block receives approximately $60,000 per month from both organizations." That's roughly $720,000 per year.

So what is Block by Block? SMS Holdings, the parent company of Block by Block, began in 1988 as a janitorial services company in Nashville, Tennessee. In the late 2000s, SMS went on a growth spurt, buying up security companies. Among these was Block by Block, a Louisville, Kentucky firm that controls a large share of the national market for "security ambassadors" and cleaning services provided to business improvement districts. By 2008, SMS posted revenues topping $300 million and its vice president predicted then that it would surpass a half billion by 2011.

A document entitled "The SMS Holdings Way," available on the company's website, reveals the Christian beliefs of its owners and executives. "From our company's beginning, our business philosophy has been God-centered and faith-based. While we will always show tolerance and acceptance of the personal beliefs of others, we recognize that there is a higher order that provides a basis for all of our core values."

It's unclear just how deeply the Christian core values of SMS Holdings' owners and executives shape company policy, but in another area, the results are much clearer. Subsidiaries of SMS Holdings, like Block by Block, maintain relatively low-wage, anti-union workplaces. SMS has been very aggressive over the past decade in lobbying federal legislators to privatize thousands of government jobs. Paying minimum wage-levels (and, in some workplaces, even less), SMS Holdings has been able to skim enormous profit margins off of outsourced local and federal government jobs.

An example of the company's anti-union policies took place in Pittsburgh when Block by Block's security ambassadors attempted to unionize through the SEIU in 2009. Block by Block managers opposed the simpler card check process, pressing instead for a secret ballot election, a procedure that gives employers more tools to scuttle pro-union outcomes. Block by Block management barred employees from wearing union buttons or talking to the media and, according to reports in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, even conducted surveillance and called the police on some of their own ambassadors who passed out pro-union literature in front of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's offices.

Block by Block appears to be a relatively small, if growing, segment of SMS Holdings. The company's bigger and more profitable ventures in recent years are private security and aviation service workers whose ranks were greatly expanded with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and then privatized en masse by the Bush administration.

The SMS Holdings subsidiary PrimeFlight specializes in providing service workers to airports and airlines. At the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, where PrimeFlight workers drive passengers through terminals, company managers have pressured their less-than-minimum-wage employees to over-report tips in order to qualify SMS Holdings for lucrative state subsidies, and to justify extremely low wages. The *Houston Chronicle* reported on November 1, 2011 that PrimeFlight's participation in a state subsidization program had been suspended, and that the company is being investigated for violating labor laws.

The most profitable anti-union activities of SMS Holdings have been directed at workers employed by its FirstLine Transportation Security subsidiary. FirstLine contracts with the Department of Homeland Security to provide airport security screeners at eight locations nationwide.

SMS Holdings' ability to combat the unionization of its workforce has been greatly enhanced by the political ties the company's executives have cultivated since the early 2000s. According to Federal Elections Commission data, executives of SMS Holdings contributed more than $100,000 to the campaigns of congressional representatives since 2003. Much of this money was funneled through the FirstLine Transportation Security PAC to select members of Congress whose powerful committee appointments gave them control over lucrative TSA contracts. Among those who benefited from SMS Holdings contributions were Republican House members John Mica of Florida and Dan Lungren of California. Mica is the current Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, while Lungren holds a seat on the House Subcommittee on Transportation Security. In the Senate, Republicans John Thune and Jim DeMint, members of the Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security Subcommittee, have been recipients of FirstLine PAC money and contributions directly from SMS Holdings' executives. These political connections continue to work for FirstLine and SMS Holdings. As recently as November of 2011, Mica was arguing for privatizing all TSA screening jobs.

But it's not just SMS Holdings' labor policies that raise concerns. In Oakland, business improvement district staffers, with much assistance from Block by Block's local operations manager Ted Tarver, have been influencing OPD policies. From the start, both the Downtown and Uptown associations have organized meetings with OPD and City Hall leaders in an attempt to integrate the districts' private security guards with OPD. Many OPD officers, however, have been resistant to working with Block by Block's ambassadors.

Even so, some OPD commanders have shown much deference to the associations and their agenda. Oakland Police Captain Anthony Toribio told the Downtown Association board in December 2009 that the department supports joint patrols of OPD officers and Block by Block security, and that these private cops could act as a "force multiplier," according to minutes of the meeting. In another meeting, Captain Toribio told the Uptown Association board that he wanted the district's private security to "share intelligence" with OPD.

In the same board meeting, Ted Tarver of Block By Block and Captain Toribio discussed ways to discipline OPD officers who continued to resist integration with Block by Block's security force. "Officers that do not like them and are resistant to work with them will be held accountable," read the minutes from the board meeting. Captain Toribio recommended that Block by Block security staff "record the car or badge number" of cops who refuse to cooperate with them, and "he will follow up with [the officers]."

Early on, Block by Block private cops also were allowed to attend OPD daily lineups. According to notes from a December 2009 Uptown Association board meeting, OPD officers also have been receiving "weekly security updates" drafted by Block By Block's Tarver.

Another means by which the Downtown and Uptown associations are "force multiplying" police and private security is through technology. Block by Block initially sought permission for its security ambassadors to carry OPD radios, but due to resistance from police rank and file, and because this could be a violation of the law, it was decided instead that OPD officers would carry Nextel phones used by Block by Block employees.

The next stage of this kind of "intelligence sharing" apparently will involve hand-held PDA devices developed by the Eponse Corporation. Former Oakland Police Chief Anthony Batts is listed on the company's website as a supporter because while heading up the Long Beach Police Department his officers shared real-time information with Block by Block security guards there to track "quality of life issues such as panhandling" and enforce curfew laws against the homeless. ●

Editor@EastBayExpress.com

Court monitors say police have made almost no progress in the past two years. Stephen Loewinsohn

NEWS

WILL OPD END UP IN RECEIVERSHIP?

Judge Henderson could begin the process of taking over the police department this month

By Ali Winston

The aftermath of the Riders police corruption scandal in Oakland, which broke more than a decade ago, has lasted through four police chiefs, three mayors, and four city administrations. A federal consent decree imposed by US District Court Judge Thelton Henderson on OPD in 2003 was originally set to end in 2008. Henderson extended the deadline until 2014, but this month, the judge may begin the unusual process of placing the Oakland Police Department into federal receivership because it has repeatedly failed to complete court mandated reforms.

According to the latest report issued on January 17 by the Independent Monitoring Team, a group of former law enforcement officers that performs quarterly audits of OPD's reform efforts, the department has made virtually no progress over the past two years and is currently further behind on meeting the requirements of the consent decree than it was fifteen months ago. The monitoring team's report, which covers a period from July through the end of September, highlights deficiencies with OPD's use of force reporting policy, internal affairs investigations, the collection of data from vehicle stops, field investigations and detentions, the consistency of internal discipline and the ability of supervisors to ensure subordinate officers act according to departmental policy.

Following the monitoring team's most recent report, civil rights attorneys John Burris and Jim Chanin, who represented the original plaintiffs in the Riders case, suggested in a court filing that Judge Henderson consider appointing a federal master to take control of OPD. "The past year has exhausted our patience," Burris said in an interview. "The question is: Has Judge Henderson exhausted his?"

In the court filing, Burris and Chanin stated that the approach to the consent decree taken by Oakland officials and OPD over the past decade has not worked. "The OPD's lack of progress in attaining compliance makes it very unlikely the OPD will achieve compliance in the current extension period which ends in January 2014. If the City is allowed to pursue its 'business as usual' approach, it is a virtual certainty that millions of dollars will be wasted and no compliance will be achieved."

Chanin and Burris are asking Henderson to set a date and briefing schedule for the filing of a motion for receivership. The attorneys argue that the need for receivership stems from the "grave danger" facing Oakland residents, visitors, and workers from OPD's continued violations of the consent decree — including the crowd control fiasco at Occupy Oakland this past fall.

Oakland officials, however, are yet again pleading for more time to meet the court-mandated reforms. In a filing last week, City Attorney Barbara Parker wrote that newly-appointed leaders such as City Administrator Deanna Santana and Interim Police Chief Howard Jordan are committed to fulfilling the reforms and have reassigned personnel to conduct policy audits and have increased training. While acknowledging the monitoring team's repeated reports of stagnation, Oakland officials maintain that the city's "overall record since 2008 demonstrates a steady effort to work through many institutional obstacles impeding compliance" and warrants more time to comply with the court requirements.

In a statement for this story, Jordan said, "As chief, I am committed to moving my department forward and I accept the accept the responsibility of the task at hand."

Federal receivers have previously been appointed in other states to desegregate schools, reform correctional systems, and rectify problems with mental health and general health-care services both in prisons and on a municipal level. The most pertinent example for OPD is the six-year receivership of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's prisoner health-care services, which was ordered by Judge Henderson in 2006 after a three-year battle over court oversight. The corrections department experience with receivership has cost California taxpayers billions of dollars and resulted in the transfer of tens of thousands of prisoners from state to county custody in the process now known as realignment.

Prison Law Office Director Don Specter, who helped bring the case that evolved into receivership of California's prisoner health-care system, said the receiver contributed greatly to the reforms. "It certainly sped up the improvement more than if the state had been left to its own devices," Specter said.

Judge Henderson essentially put the receiver in charge of the health-care system, granting the ability to hire and fire personnel, build new facilities, and allocate money without bureaucratic delays as well as protect the prisoner health-care funds from budget cuts ordered by the governor. Specter believes appointing a receiver for a police department could work "in theory" because it has worked with a wide range of public and private institutions.

In Oakland's case, if Judge Henderson appoints a receiver to take over the police department, he would be stripping a tremendous amount of power from the city administrator, the police chief, and the mayor in terms of personnel and financial decisions. One telling example from the corrections department case was the receiver's ability to discipline and hold individual employees accountable. OPD has had problems terminating officers only to see them hired back through labor arbitration. However, it is not clear whether a receiver would have the ability to override an arbitrator or even re-negotiate contracts with the Oakland police union.

Setting the stage for the discussion of appointing a receiver also could take months. In the meantime, there is a pressing need for OPD to address problems in several areas, including crowd control tactics, uses of force, and tracking arrest data. In a letter submitted to Judge Henderson, Jordan assured that he has demoted and reassigned officers under investigation. "Those persons that do not voluntarily assume these responsibilities and our cause will be personally held accountable to me," Jordan wrote.

"There is some indication of cultural change in OPD," Chanin conceded in an interview. "However, it's still one of the biggest problem police departments in the United States.

"No matter what we do, until we get these individual officers in trouble, nothing's going to change," Chanin continued, adding that he and Burris will put more pressure on individual officers such as John Hargraves and Sergeant Clifford Wong. During an Occupy Oakland protest on November 2, Hargraves was videotaped with a piece of duct tape covering his badge. Hargraves was suspended for thirty days and Wong was demoted from lieutenant for failing to report the incident to internal affairs.

The lack of a strong police chief in Oakland — or any sort of continuity in the department's leadership over the past decade — has by all accounts greatly contributed to the failure of the consent-decree mandated reforms to take root in OPD. Perhaps a federal master could provide the consistency, guidance, and most importantly, independence from Oakland's fractious political infighting needed to bring OPD into the 21st century. ●

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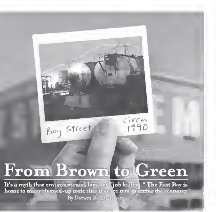

From Brown to Green

It's a myth that environmental laws are "job killers." The East Bay is home to many cleaned-up toxic sites that are now spurring the economy

By Darwin BondGraham

During a Republican presidential primary debate last June, Michele Bachmann lit into the Environmental Protection Agency, recommending it be renamed the "job-killing organization of America." Her fellow contenders nodded in agreement, each explaining how shutting down the EPA, or at least instituting a moratorium on regulations, would be a priority in their White House.

The GOP's desire to kill America's chief environmental regulator hasn't just been grist for the bizarre sideshow that is the Republican Party's presidential primary. Over the past year, Republicans in Congress — in actual positions of power — have succeeded in massively defunding the EPA. In March, no less than nineteen riders were floated on the floor of the House of Representatives to cut the EPA's budget. Fifteen Republican senators even proposed deleting the EPA as a cabinet-level agency. The harshest of these legislative bombs were diffused, but the cuts that prevailed added up to the largest single year drop in EPA funding since 1981 when President Reagan ("Trees cause more pollution than automobiles do") began his unprecedented assault on the greens.

Republicans by no means have a monopoly on the "job killer" trope. Moderate, so-called Blue Dog Democratic senators like Jay Rockefeller and Ben Nelson, who hail from states with large corporate energy interests, have co-sponsored legislation to ditch specific EPA standards. Even President Obama recently reinforced the mythology that environmental regulations are counterproductive to economic development, saying in September that his decision to rescind ozone air-quality standards was essential to the nation's economic recovery. Both parties also are seriously pursuing environmental deregulation of industry and cuts to the nation's major cleanup programs.

The problem with all of this, however, is that California's economy is now crucially dependent on environmental regulation and remediation. This is especially true in cities where decades of industrial pollution have created an environment not only toxic to human health, but also economic investment.

In fact, cleaning up toxic sites has become a fundamental driver of the Bay Area's economy. As a result, cutting the EPA's budget, and possibly reducing funds for the state agency responsible for partnering in cleanup, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), will stall job creation and condemn huge swaths of urban California as economic dead zones.

But the fallacy that environmental laws kill jobs doesn't end there. According to economists who study the impact of regulation on markets, California's economy will likely add more jobs and develop new vibrant sectors of activity much faster if politicians embrace ambitious environmental goals. According to this emerging school of thought, environmental regulations aren't only pivotal for human health and environmental quality, they stimulate innovation, and innovation is the key to California's economy.

To understand why environmental cleanup is so essential, it's helpful to go back a few decades and look at California's previous economic booms. Following World War II, the Bay Area became an epicenter of manufacturing. Everything from chemicals and aircraft parts to semiconductors and food were produced in sprawling factories built atop what just a few years before had been orchards and pastures. This industrial manufacturing economy brought enormous growth leading to mass employment and expanding tax dollars for state and local governments. Cities grew, easterners migrated west, and much of the new workforce prospered through the 1950s and 1960s, decades that enshrined California's "Golden State" image.

But the industrial boom had many dark sides. Among them was pollution. Lacking federal and state regulations, major corporations and the military dumped poisonous wastes into waterways, buried them on-site, and spewed toxins into the air where they would eventually settle onto surrounding communities.

"Until quite recently, there were few if any federal laws offering guidelines for governments attempting to regulate industries that consumed, produced, and disposed of toxic materials," explained David Pellow, a professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. "There were few resources for citizens seeking to protect the environmental health of their communities, and for industries looking for guidance on these matters." Pellow, who has closely studied the toxic legacy of post industries in California (see his book, *The Silicon Valley of Dreams*), says that it was only a matter of time before the toll of this pollution negatively affected the health of Californians, and the productivity of the state.

"The high-tech industry's health toll is readily observable in the biographies of countless workers who have been disabled, poisoned, and who have experienced premature death as a result of exposure to toxins," Pellow continued, adding that these health impacts have been a drag on the Bay Area economy. "These individuals who got sick frequently were the financial bedrock for their families, and those families were thus economically disabled, causing further ripple effects across entire communities." Added to this are health-care costs, borne largely by the public through Medicaid and other programs.

It wasn't until the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 that the nation's political debates began to focus on the environmental damage caused by chemical contamination. It took eight more years before Congress established the EPA. The California Environmental Quality Act was passed the same year in 1970, but California's Environmental Protection Agency would not be founded until 1991.

Moreover, between 1970 and today, the pace of environmental regulations and remediation programs was slow. Some say it was too piecemeal, or too late to prevent much of the economic harm that would befall exposed communities and the economy as a whole. The damage, in large part, had been done.

Today, California has about one hundred active sites on the EPA's National Priorities List, a comprehensive tally of the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants warranting cleanup. In the East Bay these Superfund sites include a former pesticide plant in Richmond, Alameda's Naval Air Station, and the AMCO Chemical site in West Oakland. With 29 sites identified for cleanup, Santa Clara County has the highest concentration of Superfund sites of any comparable region in the country, due largely to semiconductor and aerospace factories. The Los Angeles basin also has an enormous collection of Superfund sites. Much of California is checkered with extremely polluted threats to public health.

But far more numerous and economically damaging than these Superfund sites are the

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ubiquitous brownfields — toxic dumps that federal officials haven't prioritized because they do not pose the same extreme risks as Superfund sites, but which are still health hazards. They're also a big drag on the economy. "The tragedy of brownfields in this country," explained Mark Gomez, a supervisor of Environmental Protection & Compliance with the City of Oakland, "stems largely from the failure of government and the courts to consistently enforce nuisance and disclosure laws prior to the advent of environmental regulations in the 1970s, coupled with regulatory overreach and confusion in the following years.

"If disclosure laws had been enforced regarding on-site contamination it would have discouraged businesses from contaminating their own properties because of the negative impact on the eventual re-sale value," Gomez continued. "Had nuisance laws been enforced on releases of hazardous substances, it would have discouraged businesses from contaminating adjacent properties or natural resources, such as surface waters, because of the threat of a lawsuit or police action."

Unfortunately, the government and the courts took a hands-off approach for decades, only instituting strict regulations in later years. "The result was that properties went from having significant value to being financial liabilities in the blink of an eye," Gomez said.

In this sense, the environmental pollution caused by yesterday's economy, and allowed because of lax or no environmental regulations, is preventing the new urban economy from taking shape. It's been a costly detour for cities, especially the East Bay's former industrial powerhouses like Oakland, Emeryville, and Richmond.

A perfect example of brownfields and the problems they pose in terms of economic development underlies much of Emeryville. Dominated by heavy industry until the 1970s when most companies closed up shop, the city was immensely contaminated. By the early 1990s, EPA staff had classified 214 acres, or about 47 percent of the city's total footprint, as contaminated.

Because this was common knowledge, Emeryville was stuck: its economy bled jobs as employers closed down or relocated overseas. City leaders were unable to lure new residents and businesses. The ghosts of the city's industrial past appeared to prevent any kind of future. The trap was set by declining tax revenues: Emeryville had no money to undertake the work required to clean up the land and water, and to chart a new course, and developers would not come to the rescue because the up-front costs were too high and public funds were unavailable. Retail stores — the essential sources of municipal tax dollars in post-Prop 13 California — could not be built on toxic land.

Enter the EPA and DTSC. Multiple federal grants in the 1990s allowed for site assessments to identify problem areas in Emeryville, thus reducing the uncertainty of potential developers looking to locate new business or housing in the city. In 1999 a half million-dollar loan facilitated cleanup of the old Westinghouse Corporation's electrical manufacturing site, an enormous block of land saturated with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), a most persistent and deadly contaminant. Manufactured by Monsanto, and sold in the US until they were banned in 1979, PCBs were used in everything from paint to electrical insulators. Cleanup of similarly deadly chemicals at numerous other sites followed — facilitated by federal and Cal EPA expertise and funds.

These environmental cleanups also produced huge economic dividends as developers flocked to Emeryville to build on its former brownfields. According to statistics gathered by the DTSC, between 1991 and 2010, Emeryville's property values increased 371 percent, from $870 million to about $4 billion today. New retail stores, hotels, and restaurants effectively doubled sales tax revenues for the city over the same period.

"Cleanup and redevelopment of formerly contaminated properties has allowed Emeryville to emerge from its industrial past and be reinvented," noted Helen Bean, Emeryville's economic development director. Emeryville is now widely cited as one of the star examples of economic rebirth through environmental remediation, seeded largely with federal and state grants and loans — funds that the GOP wants to slash.

But without the EPA and DTSC, the cleanup in Emeryville wouldn't have happened. The city would have been caught in its toxic trap, unable to transition, unable to create thousands of construction jobs and hundreds of permanent jobs in the businesses that have opened there. According to Robert Colangelo, executive direc-

Mark Gomez is a supervisor of Environmental Protection & Compliance for the City of Oakland. Stephen Loewinsohn

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The soil beneath the former Harris Dry Cleaners is contaminated with a known carcinogen. Stephen Loewinsohn

tor of the National Brownfield Association, the real estate market would have eventually abandoned Emeryville had state and federal agencies not partnered with the city to remediate the environment. "If people take do-nothing strategies," Colangelo said with respect to brownfield pollution, "it grows and perpetuates blight and drags down the economy."

In urban California, this might be an understatement.

Moreover, had cleanup never occurred, Emeryville's residents would still be suffering from the health consequences. Their illnesses, in turn, would affect all of us, most directly because the state would be forced to dedicate public funds to cope with otherwise preventable public health problems, but also indirectly through lost economic activity due to sickness — the sorts of hidden, long-term costs Pellow has studied.

In 2009, Congresswoman Barbara Lee recognized the EPA's work in Emeryville as a "key component for community revitalization," noting that it allowed the East Bay to "turn problem properties into community assets."

Colangelo's group, the National Brownfield Association, estimates that there are more than one million brownfields nationwide, undervaluing and preventing use of as much as $2 trillion in real estate.

If Emeryville is the poster child for what's possible on a city-wide level (even if it resulted in the construction of widely derided big box stores and expensive condos), then Oakland might best be understood as the poster child for what's left to be done. Oakland is pockmarked with brownfield sites that reduce the availability of safe, affordable housing, prevent new companies from moving in, and harm the health of local residents. Contaminated land is a major but under-acknowledged reason for why the city's economy has struggled in recent decades.

"Oakland, an older city with a history of industrial activity, felt the effects of pollution and abandonment more than most," observed Gomez of the city's Environmental Protection & Compliance department. "Frequently the economics of the situation mean that brownfields lay vacant or underutilized for years — eyesores that become magnets for myriad problems."

California's Department of Toxic Substances Control has "certified" 57 different brownfield sites in Oakland, meaning the agency has extensively monitored for contaminants and cleaned up soil and groundwater to safe levels in those locations. But according to the agency's own records, there are another 25 "active" cleanups still unfinished. As a result, these properties are not available for residential and commercial uses, and thus devalue parcels nearby. Besides these works in progress, there are another thirty properties in Oakland that require environmental assessments and cleanup, but have yet to be moved on.

One active remediation site in Oakland is the old Harris Dry Cleaners on Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 28th Street. This three-story brick building on a corner lot is well known among locals for the graffiti murals wrapped around its entranceway. There's a school on the block behind it, and a community garden across the street. It's the kind of building in exactly the sort of central location you'd think someone would have found a new, innovative use for — maybe shops, live/work lofts, or an events center. But beneath the building, the soil and groundwater are contaminated with tetrachloroethylene (also called PCE), an organic solvent widely used in dry cleaning. PCE is carcinogenic and suspected of causing Parkinson's disease. It can be easily inhaled or absorbed through skin contact. If burned at a high enough temperature, PCE can turn into a deadly gas called phosgene, which was used as a chemical warfare agent in World War I.

Last year, DTSC completed its investigation of Harris Dry Cleaners, noting high levels of PCE, but it hasn't been cleaned up yet. For now the building drags down real estate prices nearby and threatens the health of local residents. Funding and a sense of urgency may be lacking partly because no private developer has targeted the site for redevelopment. This is one of the inequities of how toxic dumps are cleaned — if a developer isn't interested in the site, then local government agencies are less likely to vie for the scarce funds needed to remediate it.

Professor Nancy Green Leigh of the Georgia Institute of Technology calls these kinds of sites "low-to-no market value brownfields." Oakland and other mostly non-white, low-income communities in the East Bay are full of these problem sites. According to Green Leigh, the stumbling block is that "the current practice of many brownfield redevelopment projects is to select only the most marketable sites for remediation and redevelopment, essentially perpetuating the age-old 'creaming' process. Private and public developers' avoidance of the lowest market value parcels typically excludes disadvantaged neighborhoods from programs aimed at redeveloping brownfields and creates the potential for widening existing inequalities between better-off and worse-off neighborhoods."

Unlike Emeryville's real estate, which was seized on by land speculators two decades ago, much of West and East Oakland's polluted property remains toxic and in need of remediation. Cleanup funding therefore has a smaller constituency of advocates with political influence. Yet even with fewer private sector instigators of cleanup, Oakland is sprinkled with examples of economic rejuvenation via environmental remediation.

"Many of Oakland's redevelopment success stories over the past ten years have taken place on former brownfields," Gomez pointed out. "Most are residential developments that have taken advantage of pre-existing commercial neighborhoods and mass transit infrastructure. New residents have less need to spend time behind the wheel, thereby reducing air pollution, and their presence in the neighborhood has motivated new businesses to move in."

All this new activity, said Gomez, "creates jobs and a more vibrant, safer place to live and work." And for Gomez and his colleagues in the city's Environmental Services Division, the economic revitalization of Oakland is second only to the primacy of protecting people's health. The city has received more than $4 million since 1995 to investigate toxic sites, so at least the scale of the problem is becoming known.

But a different problem with the way cleanup is funded has recently arisen. Some of Oakland's biggest brownfields lie in the sprawling, economically depressed areas around the Coliseum and around Foothill Boulevard and Seminary Avenue. The city has staked cleanup efforts in these zones on massive redevelopment proposals, including grandiose ideas like building new privately financed stadiums to entice the A's and Raiders to stick around. Thrown in would be enormous projects, including housing, shopping centers, and transit facilities. No one really knows what the final blueprints will look like, but no matter what, it will require lots of state funding. In years past, the city's redevelopment agency footed these bills. But the recent elimination of redevelopment agencies by Governor Jerry Brown and the legislature means that state tax dollars previously allocated for these sorts of big, publicly seeded development projects are probably gone. Budget pressures exerted by the loss of redevelopment agency funds could further slow what few environmental remediation projects move forward.

And if Congress and the president continue to slash EPA funding, it's possible that specific remediation projects in the East Bay and beyond could become stalled, which means that significant sums of property and retail tax dollars will never become available for cities that have been hard hit by decades of capital flight.

For example, the former Lane Metal Finishers site on San Pablo Avenue at 30th Street in Oakland is contaminated by a cocktail of volatile chemicals and poisonous compounds, including sodium hydroxide, hydrochloric, nitric, and sulfuric acids; cadmium; and potassium cyanide. Chemicals detected in soil, groundwater, and soil gas include trichloroethylene and vinyl

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FACILITATORS *(Partial list)*

- Cindy Sheehan, peace activist
- Martín Sanchez, former Consul of Venezuela
- Andres Soto, KPLA & Richmond Progressive Alliance
- David Cobb, Move To Amend
- Laura Wells, Moderator

Landless workers in Brazil plan encampment on unoccupied land.

TOPICS

Cooperatives, Food Justice, Participatory Budgeting, Electoral Change: Constitutional Assemblies, Social Forums; Occupy Foreclosures Movement/Landless Workers Movement Social Movements and Electoral Movements working together for change

The Cartagena Accords in Honduras allowed for the return of President Zelaya and the formal recognition of the new Frente Amp in (Broad Front) of the official resistance.

WHEN & WHERE

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Behind this fence: the Lane Metal Finishers site is contaminated with poisonous compounds. Stephen Loewinsohn

chloride. In homes and businesses adjacent to the site, EPA staff measured toxic gases in concentrations exceeding state safety limits.

A school, a child-care center, and several churches are within 1,000 feet of the Lane Metal Finishers site. The neighborhood is predominantly black and Asian, and working class. EPA is currently carrying out a pilot study to attempt to extract soil vapors, but more work needs to be done to protect nearby residents and to bring this real estate back into the economy, hopefully in a way that benefits those who live there.

But funds are scarce. "We have made cuts just like everyone else to accommodate for the state's budget shortfall," admitted Lindsay VanLaningham of Cal EPA. "We've cut positions, cellphones, and travel." VanLaningham noted, however, that "because [DTSC] is almost 97-percent special funded, we are able to continue with our core programs that protect and preserve the environment and public health." This is because Cal EPA and DTSC's funds come largely from fees and penalties paid by corporations and developers whose activities can negatively impact the environment.

Yet even these fees and penalties are not safe from misguided or cynical attempts by politicians to "reform" regulatory policy or "fix the budget." Early in 2011, Republican state lawmakers demanded an overhaul of California environmental regulations as part of any possible budget deal with Governor Brown. At the time, they were essentially talking about eliminating the regulatory sources of these revenues, a move that might require major cuts to programs like brownfield cleanup.

And a wider assault on environmental regulations could cause economic stagnation across California and the nation's economy in more systematic ways.

So if environmental regulations can turn brownfields into fields of green, why have mainstream economists, politicians, and business leaders gotten it so backward? In 1991, a professor at the Harvard Business School — hardly a bastion of environmentalism — was among the first to question the mythology surrounding environmental regulation, touching off two decades of debate and research that has provided ample evidence in favor of strong environmental laws and regulations as sound economic policy.

"Strict environmental regulations do not inevitably hinder competitive advantage against rivals," wrote Michael Porter in a *Scientific American* article more than twenty years ago. "Indeed, they often enhance it."

Porter's point was two-pronged and designed to appeal to his audience of fellow economists and business leaders. On the one hand he surmised that in the absence of strong environmental laws and regulations, firms, and even whole economies, actually waste resources. This lack of efficiency causes them to be much less competitive with other companies and regions. With smart, focused regulations aimed at reducing wasteful pollution, productivity rises and the whole economy grows. Second, Porter conjectured that well-designed regulations actually can spur technological and resource innovation, leading not only to compliance and a healthier environment, but perhaps even savings for companies, and whole new business opportunities for those who do the cleanup.

An entire new school of economists is testing this theory with rigorously designed experiments and case studies. Their findings, overall, are that there is no inherent "jobs versus environment" problem.

"In reality, the few empirical studies that have tracked actual changes in employment from environmental regulation suggest that there is either no impact, or a small positive impact on employment," explained Mark Cohen, a professor of management and law at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Cohen's academic research into the relationship between environmental law and the economy took off in the early 1990s when he became the co-director of Vanderbilt's Center for Environmental Management Studies. Previously, he had worked as a senior research economist for multiple branches of the federal government including the Federal Trade Commission and the EPA. His forthcoming book, *The Distributional Consequences of Energy and Climate Policy*, a painstakingly researched volume drawing on the most recent research and available data, directly addresses the relationship between government regulation and economic growth.

According to Cohen, the relationship is probably neutral when all is fully accounted for. In other words, regulations pertaining to pollution, resource exploitation, and other environmental harms are neither inherently "good" nor "bad" for the immediate economic prospects for growth. However they can be good or bad to specific parties who might benefit from certain existing regulations or the lack thereof at the expense of others. Thus, Cohen says the real reasons why environmental regulations have become a whipping post for many lawmakers and the interests they represent, is probably political in nature having more to do with the ways that environmental policy affects the distribution of income or how many regulations can undermine existing monopolies or privileges in favor of innovators.

Cohen offered the example of new laws that might require more stringent pollution controls on fossil fuel power plants: "Either those plants will be built with more pollution controls, or alternative and renewable energy sources of electricity [or energy efficiency projects] will be needed to fulfill the demand for electricity. So, if there is reduced investment in coal-fired power plants" resulting from new environmental regulations Cohen concluded that "there will be investment elsewhere to produce the needed electricity." In other words the economy neither grows nor shrinks, but the distribution of wealth and power certainly shifts.

In recent years, California has seen exactly this scenario play out. A 2006 law virtually banned electricity produced by coal fired power plants, either from the few existing coal plants located in the state, or from existing and planned coal plants in Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and elsewhere. Predictably the main opponents to this new regulation on CO2 and mercury pollution were entrenched coal companies and utilities with planned major coal energy investments. Some called the regulation a "job killer" and claimed it would tank California's economy but partly because it was signed into law by then Republican Governor Schwarzenegger the claim that it was a misguided liberal environmental initiative didn't stick.

Rather than eliminating jobs and bogging down the economy, the new mandate has instead guaranteed a massive influx of money and labor into the construction of cleaner power plants. These mostly include gas-fired generators, but also a significant shift of investment has gone toward solar wind, and geothermal projects. As a result, today only 7.7 percent of California's gross system power is sourced from coal-fired plants, whereas in 2005 it was 20 percent according to the California Energy Commission.

In short, laws that reduced coal electricity purchases reduced carbon and mercury emissions, while also providing a much needed stimulant for the state's green economy. The Bay Area in particular boasts perhaps the highest concentration of solar firms of any US region. Companies here work across all levels of the industry from major designer-developers of thermal solar arrays like BrightSource Energy Inc., to installers of photovoltaic arrays like Sungevity, both based in Oakland. Various venture capital and investment funds in San Francisco and Silicon Valley meanwhile, are eagerly helping finance solar expansion.

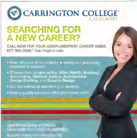
California's laws and regulations give solar and other renewable energy companies a leg up in one of the largest energy markets in the world allowing them to operate on a more level playing field with the entrenched powers of the major utilities and energy companies heavily vested in coal, oil and gas technologies. This has tempted companies like SunEdison which has developed more than five hundred megawatts of solar energy across the country to relocate its headquarters to the Bay Area a place where the company notes there is clear demand for the product and a talented, experienced workforce. "We believe that California will be the largest market and we want to be part of that," SunEdison president Carlos Domenech told the *San Francisco Chronicle* in October last year.

So why does the jobs-versus-environment trope still get so much play? "An important reason you often hear this," observed Cohen, "is that the entrenched industries with existing political connections are those most likely to be negatively affected by environmental regulations — while those who are most likely to benefit are more dispersed and oftentimes politically less connected."

"Those who have to pay the cost of environmental policies and those who benefit from them are often not the same companies," noted Stefan Ambec, a senior researcher at the Toulouse School of Economics in France who concurs with Cohen on the subject of why many environmental regulations are unfairly demonized. Ambec's view is informed by the situation in Europe where regulations are much more developed and stringent than in the United States, but he observes that the sources of opposition to regulation and remediation are very

Helen Bean is Emeryville's economic development director

Stephen Loewinsohn



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much the same.

"Big companies in concentrated industries like steel, oil and electricity production are reluctant to [support] policies like the carbon tax, or carbon trading, and the new companies of the eco-industries are often smaller firms and less politically powerful," Ambee continued. This lack of political power and lack of resources to make their case in the media, according to Ambee, results in clean tech and green tech firms losing out to established, dirtier companies using older technologies, simply because the status quo outspends emergent innovators in securing favorable politicians and laws.

According to Cohen, the truth is: "There is no evidence that countries with strong environmental regulations lose their competitive edge. If anything, countries have found that environmental regulation spurs technological innovation which produces opportunities for them to export pollution control technologies."

Looking back over the past half-century, Pellow contends that the absence of environmental regulation has been a "lose-lose" scenario for the Bay Area and the nation. "It has contributed to greater public health and ecosystem risks vis-à-vis toxic chemicals, fewer protections for workers in those industries, and ultimately greater vulnerability to economic instability as those industries became more mobile, more global and easily picked up to find greener pastures in other nations where regulations were even weaker." These unregulated industries left behind a toxic legacy of brownfields that act as deadweights on the local economies of many California cities today. Added to this multi-trillion-dollar problem of accumulated past pollution, economists like Cohen and Ambee warn that we risk further economic stagnation if we fall for the "jobs versus environment" myth.

While President Obama stumbled hard several times in his first term on exactly this issue, there are signs that his administration is increasingly willing to take a more enlightened path. During a January 10 visit to the EPA's headquarters, Obama told more than eight hundred staffers that he will "stand with them every inch of the way" during the year ahead. Calling industry and Republican demands for rollbacks of the most fundamental regulations governing power plants, farms, factories, and vehicle fleets a "false debate," Obama said: "We don't have to choose between dirty air and dirty water or a growing economy. We can make sure that we are doing right by our environment, and in fact putting people back to work all across America."

Backing up these words is a recent landmark regulation approved by the president. In December Obama enacted strict rules reducing mercury pollution from power plants against much opposition from owners of the nation's dirtiest coal plants. EPA economists project that these standards will actually create 46,000 short-term jobs and 8,000 permanent positions in the utility industry. It was exactly the kind of smart regulation that, contrary to the myth, will both protect the environment and create jobs in a cleaner economy.

The bad news is that even if Obama has found the courage to push for stronger, smarter regulations, he may not be able to do so until after the elections. Many political analysts think the House of Representatives will remain in Republican control and that the Senate may pass into the hands of Republicans next year.

The significance of this should be clear: Republicans are much more hostile to environmental regulations. In the 2012 election cycle, Republican candidates have taken the lion's share of campaign contributions from dirty industries seeking to avoid new regulations that would undermine their monopoly status and force them to redistribute profits away from executive bonuses and shareholder dividends.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, 87 percent of coal company contributions have gone to Republican coffers. For chemical manufacturers, it's 78 percent — 88 percent for oil and gas companies. If these entrenched interests buy enough seats in the next Congress, perhaps the best Obama can offer in terms of environmental cleanup funding and regulations is nothing — leaving only a veto for polluter-friendly bills.

"WE DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN DIRTY AIR AND DIRTY WATER OR A GROWING ECONOMY," OBAMA SAID. "WE CAN MAKE SURE WE ARE DOING RIGHT BY OUR ENVIRONMENT, AND IN FACT PUTTING PEOPLE BACK TO WORK ALL ACROSS AMERICA."

In California, the situation could be worse. Even though a majority of legislators say they favor cleanup regulations and the development of clean technologies, the state's budget crisis threatens to sink environmental initiatives. And the abolition of redevelopment agencies threatens to eliminate billions in local funds used to leverage even more federal money and private investment on contaminated properties.

Helen Bean of Emeryville knows better than anyone the impact this will have on cities where economic recovery absolutely depends on remediation. "Redevelopment agencies have provided a significant source of funding for brownfield remediation, and as of February 1, this funding will be terminated," she noted. "Without the focused efforts of the Emeryville Redevelopment Authority and its work to forge partnerships with EPA and other funding entities, the former brownfield sites now occupied by parks, commercial centers, affordable and market rate housing would likely still be fenced, abandoned, and un utilized."

What's more, the budget crunch is undermining the state's regulators by default. "By terminating redevelopment agencies," Bean continued, "the state of California loses a very important tool in brownfield remediation — the Polanco Act." That legislation, as Bean explained, "allows redevelopment agencies to go after responsible parties — those entities that actually polluted the ground and water — and require them to bear the costs of cleanup."

Thus, even without climate deniers and coal industry figureheads in office, California's budget crisis threatens to eliminate the tools, imperfect as they are, that can be of most use in seeking a green economic recovery. ◆

Editor@EastBayExpress.com

ARTS & CULTURE

EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

Feeling Good

Good Vibrations opens a sixth retail location

The vibe in Oakland's trendy Lakeshore shopping district got a lot sexier this month. We're talking sexiness of the female-friendly, health-positive variety, not the salacious, seedy sort. That erotic upswing came with the January 2 opening of Bay Area-based sex toy purveyor Good Vibrations' sixth retail space at 3219 Lakeshore Avenue. The new location marks the 35-year-old company's first foray into Oakland, where, according to Events and Publicity Manager Camille Lombard, the retailer has wanted to set up shop since venturing to Berkeley in 1994.

"We've gotten requests for a store in Oakland for years," Lombard said, adding that the city is "very near and dear" to the hearts of many Good Vibrations employees, some of whom, including members of senior and executive management, are longtime Oakland residents. But such an expansion wasn't always feasible. In 2007, the company faced financial troubles due to increased competition from online retailers. Lombard said Good Vibes was on the brink of bankruptcy before GVA-TWN, a Cleveland-based adult industry distribution firm, bought the company, and its chief operating officer, Joel Kaminsky, came in and "lucky for us, used some business savvy and some capital and was able to sustain the company and ultimately allow us to grow." (The company has since come under private ownership.)

As was the case with the opening of its downtown San Francisco store in 2010 (smack in the middle of a mainstream shopping district), when Good Vibrations announced its intentions to open on Lakeshore Avenue — an area popular with families and located about five hundred feet from a park — the plan drew resistance from some residents. But opponents were overruled by staunch supporters, and the city's Planning Commission approved a conditional lease for the store last September, giving the company the go-ahead to bring its curated selection of sex accessories and in-store events to the neighborhood, so long as it keeps its window displays PG. That's a requirement that Lombard doesn't foresee as a problem. "We have very discreet storefronts," she said, "and there are plenty of products that we can display in the window without offending anybody."

And so far, plenty have embraced the new sex shop, or, as the company euphemistically refers to itself, the "clean, well-lighted vibrator store." Lombard reported that business has been buzzing ("so to speak"), with one generous customer even bringing in cookies for the staff. "This is a neighborhood that resonates with the personality of our store," she said. "There are already lots of great boutiques and restaurants, and now you can go to your yoga class, get your organic vegetables, and get your vibrator."

The store celebrates its grand opening on Saturday, January 28, during which Grammy-winning songwriter and producer Kandi Burruss debuts her new line of discreet sex toys, "Bedroom Kandi" (vibrators disguised as lipstick and compact mirrors). Partiers can also snap pictures in a photobooth, spin the "Wheel of Pleasure" to win sexy prizes, and pick up coupons for "Kandi Kiss" cocktails at the revamped Easy Lounge. 6-9 p.m., free. 510-788-2369 or GoodVibes.com

— Cassie Harwood

ATTRACTIONS

Film Screening: Bicycle Dreams The Oakland premiere of the documentary film about the Race Across America. A benefit for the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay. Thu., Jan. 26, 7 p.m. $10-$15. BicycleDreamsMovie.com. Grand Lake Theatre, 3200 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-452-3556. [illegible]

Redwood Valley Railway A twelve-minute scenic journey by steam train through the redwoods of Tilden Regional Park. Info: 510-548-6100. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. $2 per ticket, or 5 tickets for $8. Tilden Regional Park, [illegible] Canyon Rd. and Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley. 510-843-7137. [illegible]

USS Iowa Tours Tour part of the main deck of the Pacific Battleship Center's "Battleship of Presidents" as it undergoes renovation. Tour features viewings of [illegible] a flight simulator and a short film about the ship. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Continues through Mar. 17. $5-$10. USS Iowa, 1411 Harbour Way South, Richmond. 877-448-3691. PacificBattleship.com.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

OMCA Lunar New Year Celebration Celebrate the Year of the Dragon with entertainment by the Red Panda Acrobats and Cantonese rapper [illegible], Japanese taiko drumming, Chinese opera face painting, a Tibetan prayer flag-making demonstration, and much more. Sun., Jan. 29, 12-4:30 p.m. Free with museum admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

[illegible] Celebration With a screening and discussion of Jon Wyatt's new documentary, [illegible]. Sat.-Sun., Jan. 28-29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. $10-$15. Playland-Not-at-the-Beach, 10979 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. Playland-Not-at-the-Beach.org.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Body Therapy for Health Catherine Mac Guinness, R.N. leads an introductory workshop and demonstration of [illegible], Lymph Drainage, and Rosen method therapies. Tue., Jan. 31, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free. BodyTherapyForHealth.com. Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden, 1223 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-2385. [illegible]

Herbal Supplements for Healthy Weight Management Rosika Mátz shares products to help you meet your weight and health goals. Fri., Jan. 27, 12 p.m., free. Piedmont Integrative Pharmacy, 5720 College Ave., Oakland.

[illegible] A series of classes featuring [illegible], bodywork and [illegible] exercises for all levels. Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Continues through Jan. 28. $5 per class, first two classes free. The [illegible] Center, 6075 Claremont Ave., Oakland. 510-428-0937. [illegible]

Presence in Movement With [illegible] bodywork and [illegible] for [illegible] and revitalization. For all levels. Mondays, 7-8:30 p.m. Continues through Jan. 30. $15 per session. The [illegible] Center, 6076 Claremont Ave., [illegible] 510-428-0937. [illegible]

KIDS

Game Day With board games, cards, puzzles and more. For kids in grade 2 and up. Thu., Jan. 26, 3:30-5 p.m., free. Bay Farm Island Library, 3221 Mecartney Rd., Alameda. 510-747-7787.

Hansel & Gretel A stage adaptation of the classic children's fairytale, produced and performed by students in the Children's theater program. Intended for kids in grades one through 3. Thu., Jan. 26, 4 p.m., [illegible] LeFevre Theatre, Saint Mary's College, Moraga. 925-631-4381.

A Sky Full of Stars Use the planetarium to discover the sky as it looks throughout the course of a day and see various planets up close. Recommended for kids ages four to eight. Call or check website for daily dates, as there are some [illegible] to the weekly event. Saturdays, Sundays, 1-1:45

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We're pretty experienced teachers, and we offer helpful knowledge for beginners and experts alike.

For this round, we'll do the usual brakes, gears, & flat tires, and wheel master Chuck Betz will be teaching all about building and truing wheels.

We'll also have another session of the Bike Handling class, where we tell you how to climb, descend, brake, and choose the safe line around corners, both on-road and off-- very important in our hilly part of the world.

All classes start at 7:30 pm and NOTICE THAT THEY FALL ON DIFFERENT DAYS OF THE WEEK! ...and it's all for FREE!

SPRING 2012 SCHEDULE:
1: FLAT TIRES!
Mon, Feb 13th
2: GEARS! How it goes...
Thurs, Feb 23rd
3: BRAKES! How it stops.
Mon, Feb 27th
4: FLAT TIRES AGAIN. yay!
Tues, March 6th
5: WHEELS! Learn Building and truing from a master.
Thurs, March 15th
6: BIKE HANDLING: (a "don't crash" course)
Thurs, March 22nd

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PICKS

Bay Area International Childrens Film Festival

You don't have to be a kid to appreciate the Bay Area International Children's Film Festival, though it probably wouldn't hurt. In addition to screenings of 32 family-friendly independent films and shorts from around the world, the two-day fest features animation and other film-themed workshops (led by Pixar animator Jim Capobianco) for kids ages six to fourteen. Be sure to catch *Crin-Blanc* (1952), a French film about a young boy and his unlikely friendship with a wild stallion, and *Circus Dreams*, a documentary about a traveling youth circus. At the Art Deco Theater (1701 Saratoga St., Alameda) the Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 28-29. 10 a.m., $10-$20. BAICFF.com *— Cassie Harwood*

Bay Area International Children's Film Festival

White Elephant Preview Sale

For those who enjoy rummaging through endless piles of antiques and vintage clothing, toys, and other old gems, the Oakland Museum Women's Board's annual White Elephant Sale (held this year on Saturday and Sunday March 3-4) is a veritable treasure trove. If you're already itching to get your hands on this year's offerings, or you're just distraught at the thought of a fellow forager getting to the goods first, you can purchase a ticket for the White Elephant Preview Sale taking place at the White Elephant Sale Warehouse (333 Lancaster St., Oakland) on Sunday, Jan. 29. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., $15-$20. 510-536-6800 or WhiteElephantSale.org. *— C.H*

p.m. Continues through Jan. 28. $4. Lawrence Hall of Science, 1 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-642-5132. LawrenceHallofScience.org.

Storytime and Nature Tots With nature-themed stories, "videos," scavenger games and meet-and-greets with pets/animals. At the Visitor Center. Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 28. free. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-521-7275. EBParks.org.

Video Game Programming for Kids A class for kids over age 10 to learn how to program, create whole games, and other game development skills. Saturdays, 10-11 a.m. free. The Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment, 610 16th St., Oakland. TheMade.com.

Whole Bird Game for Kids A family-friendly naturalist-led birding walk around Lake Merritt to count winter birds like ducks, cormorants and herons. Sat., Jan. 28, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. free. 510-[illegible]. [illegible] Lake [illegible] Rotary Nature Center, 600 Bellevue Ave., Oakland. 510-238-3739. LakeMerritt.org.

Worlds of Wonder With folk and fairytales from around the world. For preschool and school-age children and their caregivers. Sun., Jan. 29, 2 p.m. free. Alameda Free Library, 1550 Oak St., Alameda. 510-747-7777. CityofAlamedaCA.gov/Library.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

77 Steps The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival features a screening of Ibtisam Mara'ana's film about leaving her Arab-Muslim village to make a life for herself in Tel Aviv. In Hebrew and Arabic, with English subtitles. Thu., Jan. 26, 7:30-9:30 p.m. $6-$8. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/216[illegible]. Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, Berkeley Branch, 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0237. JCCEB.org.

Introduction to the Shamanic Journey Learn how to shamanic journey and [illegible] to understand the world of spirit and energy. Jan. 28-29, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. $295-$350. [illegible] Sacred Stream Center, 2140 Byron St., Berkeley. 415-333-6434. SacredStream.org.

Kabbalah Book Talk with Howard Lipman The rabbi reads from and discusses his new book, *Kingdom of Experience*. Sun., Jan. 29, 3-4:30 p.m. [illegible] 3042 Claremont Ave., Berkeley. 510-655-5977.

Nyingma Sunday Talk This week, Jack van der Meulen gives a talk on "Opening the Heart to Feeling." Sun., Jan. 29, 6-7 p.m. free. Tibetan Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

Richard Hoffman "Mystical Heart-Music: The World of Esoteric Jewish Prayer" The guitar [illegible] "the ground transformative presence of mystic poetic and psycho-spiritual song words of prayer" and more. Wed., Feb. 1, 7:30-9 p.m., $5 suggested donation. Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley. 510-526-3805.

Walking in Space: Opening to Harmony Nyingma instructor Ken McKeon leads a transformative knowledge workshop. Sat., Jan. 28, 9:45 a.m.-4:45 p.m., $80. Tibetan Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Berkeley Underground Film Society Join the film club for screenings of 8mm, Super 8, and 16mm movies and shorts. This week: *King Kong* (1933). Arrive at 708 Gilman St., Berkeley. Sun., Jan. 29, 7 p.m., free. BerkeleyUndergroundFilm.Blogspot.com.

Grown-Up Game Night An evening of game-playing for adults only. Thu., Jan. 26, 6-10 p.m. $10. Playland-Not-at-the-Beach, 10979 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. PlaylandNotattheBeach.org.

Wild Night at the Museum A family-friendly evening of crafts, games, raffles, food, beer and wine tasting, and live animal games. Call or visit website for details. For museum members only. Sat., Jan. 28, 6-9 p.m. $10-$50. 925-627-2951. WildlifeMuseum.org/wildnight. Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 1st Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-627-2928. WildlifeMuseum.org.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Game of the Day Explore the shoreline and [illegible] the returning seasonal shorebirds and other natural attractions. Saturdays, Sundays, 2-3 p.m. Continues through Jan. 29. free. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-521-7275. EBParks.org.

Dragon Boat Dragons Join the Alameda Dragon Flyers for free introductory dragon boating sessions. [illegible] starts at 2400 Mariner Square Dr. Saturdays, 8:45-10:30 a.m. free. 510-521-7555. AlamedaDragonFlyers.com.

East Bay Moon Hike A challenging five-mile hike around the Sea View Trail loop, followed by a moon-lit hike. Park in the [illegible] gravel overflow parking lot. Wear hiking boots and bring a picnic dinner. Fri., Jan. 27, 6 p.m. free. EastBayMoons.com. Tilden Regional Park, Claremont at Wildcat Canyon Rd. and Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley. 510-843-2137. EBParks.org/Parks/Tilden.

Fight Club Play old school fighting video games like *Soul Calibur* and *Street Fighter* with a tournament at 7:30 p.m. Tournament game determined by popular vote. Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m. free general play; $5 tournament entry. The Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment, 610 16th St., Oakland. TheMade.com.

Fish Feeding Time Learn about bay creatures and watch them eat. Saturdays, Sundays, 3-3:30 p.m. Continues through Jan. 29. free. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-521-7275. EBParks.org.

New Year's Qigong Walk Bring gems and a World to share. Sun., Jan. 29, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. free. Tilden Greens Area, North end of Central Park Dr., Berkeley. 510-544-2233. EBParks.org/Parks/ec/TNA.

Qigong through Community Foundation: Chen Style Tai Chi Learn the original form of Tai Chi with May Chen, the 2010 Tai Chi Master of the Year. At the Ohlone College Newark Center (39399 Cherry St., Rm. 5407, Newark). Saturdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Continues through Mar. 8. $95 for 8 classes. 510-745-2900. QigongAugust.net.

SPORTS-SPECTATOR

Cal Men's Basketball Versus Stanford. Sun., Feb. 19, 5:30 p.m. Haas Pavilion, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-0580. CalBears.com/Facilities/Haas-Pavilion.html.

Cal Men's Tennis The ITA Kick-Off [illegible] Championship starts at 1 p.m. Mon., Jan. 30. $7. Hellman Tennis Center, Oxford St. at Frank Schlessinger Wy., Berkeley. 510-642-0580. CalBears.com/Facilities/Hellman-Tennis-Complex.html.

Cal Women's Tennis Versus San Diego State. Wed., Feb. 1, 1:30 p.m. Hellman Tennis Center, Oxford St. at Frank Schlessinger Wy., Berkeley. 510-642-0580. CalBears.com.

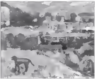
Cal Women's Water Polo California Invitational. Jan. 27-29. Spieker Pool, Bancroft Way at Dana St., Berkeley. 510-642-4810. RecSports.Berkeley.edu.

Golden Gate Fields: Dollar Days Sundays, $1. Golden Gate Fields, 1100 Eastshore Hwy., Berkeley. 510-559-7300. GoldenGateFields.com.

Golden State Warriors Versus Oklahoma City Thunder. Fri., Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m. $15-$1,700. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com. Versus the Sacramento Kings. Tue., Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m., $15-$1,700. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com.

Monster Energy AMA Supercross Sat., Jan. 28, 7 p.m. $15-$100. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com. ●

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES



Karen Zullo Sherr's "The Dog at Albany Bulb"

Light/Dark

Hayward and Berkeley shows run the emotional gamut.

Joe Slusky and Katie Hawkinson are showing together in *Interactions*, a retrospective in Hayward of the Berkeley couple's sculptures and paintings, respectively, that reveals both their differences and their similarities. Slusky makes welded steel sculptures that draw equally from the wells of cubism, constructivism, and surrealism. Although he has made public sculptures, modest-size pieces are shown here, set atop a forest-like grouping of pedestals that is oddly fun to negotiate (but watch those elbows).

Slusky's oddball aggregations suggest machines and movement, like the absurdist devices of Jean Tinguely, but with a less frenetic spirit. Covered with jazzy abstract patterns in auto lacquer as if by some mystical union of Kandinsky, Haring, and tribal/folk artists, these elegantly crafted Rube-Goldberg works, given memorably quirky or suggestive names, and sometimes hinting at fauna and flora, radiate good humor. Don't miss "Oggle," "Palais de Haon," "Chipogolo," "Cakewalk," "Puhoe-hoe," or "Wamba" — just to mention a few.

Hawkinson also draws on modernist tradition for her acrylic paintings, some of which refer to a spiritualized, visually simplified nature (flowers, landscape, forests, waves, starry skies), while others explore geometric abstraction's link with transcendent states of being. Among the former are her three oceanic wave-form triptychs, "Oceans of Grace," "Currents of Grace," and "Waves of Grace," with their wave forms simplified into oscillating patterns like wood grain or fingerprints, and the Impressionistic "Forest Pond," with its echoes of Monet and Fairfield Porter. Hawkinson depicts psychic states in semi-abstract pieces like "Pure Gold Light" and "Pagan Rite of Spring," and the concentric, geometric targets or mandalas of "Planetary Time" and the synesthetic "Fog Horn," sound made visible. Through February 4 at Sun Gallery (1015 E St., Hayward). (510) 581-4050 or SunGallery.org.

Dark Illuminations: Painting of Mysteries is the paradoxical theme of a Berkeley show featuring Jesse Michaels, Terri Saul, and Karen Zullo Sherr, who come from diverse backgrounds in rock music, literature, and political activism, but who share an interest in narrative. Michaels' mixed-media works on paper explore Film Noir's "world of erotic tension and constant suspicion." The most effective of these eschew modernist fragmentation and embrace pulp tradition, like "City at Night," although "Raw Deal" and "The Fight" convey anxiety and violence, if more abstractly. Saul's "Nowhere Near Topanga Canyon," "Film Costume," and "Riding the Waves" and Sherr's "Mountain View Cemetery" and "The Dog at Albany Bulb" show both artists at their best when they abandon the literal and literary. Through January 28 at Mythos Fine Art & Artifacts (1747 Solano Ave., Berkeley). 510-528-4291 or MythosFineArt.com.

— *DeWitt Cheng*

ART GALLERIES

ACCI Gallery, Beneath the Surface With prints by Cathy Coe, Angie Garbarino, and Dolores Sherwin. Through Feb. 5. 1652 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2527. ACCIGallery.com.

Aftermodern Pub, Passage Fantastique Paintings by [illegible] Fugelly that explore the issue of space as an essential human concern. Through Jan. 31. 1082 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2473. AftermodernPub.com.

Aston Ansoorian Gallery, At Below A group show featuring members of San Francisco's [illegible] Street Walk shop, with works across media by Chris E. Vargas, Mirelle Manganas, the Hugo, and [illegible]. Through Jan. 27. 317 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-297-5353.

Bedford Gallery, SNAP: A National Juried Exhibition in Photography With works by 47 artists from around the country, shown in three themes: Our Land, Our World; Our People: Narrative, Portraits; and Conceptual, Abstract. Through Feb. 19. **[illegible] 1950-1980: Land, Figure, Abstract** With historic artworks spanning three decades by renowned American photographer [illegible]. On display in the Alcove Gallery. Through Feb. 19. 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1417. BedfordGallery.org.

Berkeley Art Center Store The annual artists exhibition [illegible] by artists from the Berkeley Art Center. Through Jan. 29. **BAC's Spring Artist Lecture Series** With painter and printer Deborah Oropallo. Sat., Jan. 28, 8 p.m. 1275 Walnut St. (in Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

[illegible], Berkeley in the 1960s A Photo Exhibition by John [illegible] who in 1969 served as the [illegible] editor in the Berkeley BARB newspaper. Through Jan. 31. 2522 [illegible] Way, Berkeley. 510-644-3697.

CK Gallery, Atmospheric: Beneath and Hidden Agendas A solo exhibition of abstract works addressing emotional [illegible] by Oakland artist Rose Anne Critchfield. Through Feb. 5. 4125 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-710-2621. CKGallery.org.

David Brower Center, [illegible] Photographs by [illegible]. Through Jan. 27. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-809-2000. BrowerCenter.org.

[illegible] Gallery and Framing, [illegible] The Point Richmond Art Collective's first show in 2012 [illegible] works in blown and fused glass. Through Feb. 17. 121 Park Place, Point Richmond. 510-778-1680. [illegible]GalleryandFraming.com.

Doyle Deluxe Color Energy Feeling and Color in Motion Monotypes in water media by Judith Maue. Through Jan. 31. 5615 Doyle St., Emeryville. 510-547-3840. DoyleStreetCafe.com.

EBMUD Gallery, EBMUD Employee Biennale 2011 With art works by EBMUD employees. Works [illegible] paintings, ceramics, photographs, and more. Through Jan. 27. 375 11th St., Oakland. 510-287-5300. EBMUD.com/Art.

[illegible] Four Colors Screen Printing Art Gallery, [illegible] With Kara Joslyn, [illegible], Bill Vargas, Charles St. Clair, Nate Crane, [illegible], Emily Gabrielson, and Case [illegible]. Through Jan. 28. 1525 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. [illegible]FourColors[illegible].

Firehouse North, New Pieces: Four Painters' Exhibition With [illegible] paintings by [illegible], [illegible] Gonzalez, and Karen Zullo Sherr. Through Mar. 31. 1790 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. FirehouseArtCollective.blogspot.com.

[illegible] Gallery, The Digital Arts Club Exhibition Show With digital art prints by 22 artists working in an array of artistic mediums. Jan. 28-Mar. 8. 510-524-1577. DigitalArtsClub.com. 2050 Center St., Berkeley. 510-981-3000. [illegible]ArtsCouncil.com.

Kala Art Institute Gallery, Kala Artists' Annual Exhibition With works across media by artists affiliated with the Kala Art Institute. Through Feb. 4. 2990 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley.

[illegible], We All Float Down Here With chosen found images from various sources (both contemporary photographs and art-historical images) by Albert [illegible] and [illegible].

2011-2012 SEASON

music dance theater

Cal Performances

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Fabio Biondi, *conductor & violin*

Fri, Jan 27, 8 pm, First Congregational Church

Performing Baroque and classical masterworks with unparalleled passion, Fabio Biondi and his orchestra return with a program featuring concertos, symphonies, and a suite from the best known to newly discovered composers.

Program: Boccherini: Sinfonia in D major; Haydn: Concerto for Violin and Harpsichord in F major; Scaccia: Violin Concerto in E-flat major; Vivaldi: Concerto for Violin, Op. 3, No. 3, from *Estro Armonico*; J. S. Bach: Concerto for Two Violins in D minor; Handel: Suite from *Rodrigo*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Charles Dutoit, *conductor*

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *piano*

Sat, Jan 28, 8 pm, Zellerbach Hall

Liszt Piano Concerto No. 2 / Brahms Symphony No. 1

An essential conductor, an acclaimed soloist, a great orchestra, and a phenomenal program. Joining these exceptional music makers is French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, who dazzled audiences last season with his virtuoso all-Liszt program.

Program: Kodály: *Dances of Galánta*; Liszt: Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major; Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C minor

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Alfredo Rodriguez, *piano*

Sun, Jan 29, 7 pm, Hertz Hall

Discovered at the Montreux Jazz Festival by Quincy Jones, this phenomenal young Cuban-born pianist calls up images of such legendary jazz pianists as Keith Jarrett, Thelonius Monk, Art Tatum, Bill Evans, and his compatriot Chucho Valdés.

The Polychoral Splendors of Renaissance Florence

Davitt Moroney, *director*

His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts

Fri & Sat, Feb 3 & 4, 8 pm,

First Congregational Church

The largest known contrapuntal choral work in Western music, Alessandro Striggio's *Missa sopra Ecco sì beato giorno* in 40 and 60 parts, long thought to be lost, was recently rediscovered in France by UC Berkeley musicologist Davitt Moroney, who here conducts a performance featuring five different Bay Area choirs.

Program: Cavazzoni: Intonazione for organ; Fiocsetto: *Cantantibus populo meos* for 50 voices; Four instrumental canzonas; Anonymous: *Usum cafe dours, ne ieres vace per eum*, canon for 40 voices; Striggio: Motet *Ecce beatam lucem* for 40 voices; *Missa sopra Ecco sì beato giorno* for 40 and 60 voices

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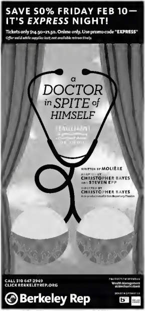

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PICKS

Detail of Michele Hofherr's "Ink Explosion #4"

Hanno Cheng

Water/Color

The rains are back, so this two-person show exploring hydrodynamics is right on schedule. Michele Hofherr captures the whorls, ringlets, and blooms of colored ink dropped into clear water in her *Ink Explosion* series of untitled but numbered color photos. The wispy fluid arabesques are reminiscent of the drip and stain paintings of the [illegible] Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis, and suggest the richness of undirected natural phenomena — judiciously edited, of course. Jane Norling's mixed-media (not watercolor) painting series, *Shaped by Water*, with its vertical formats (unusual for landscape), depicts scenic and even mythic locales (or yogic states? It's unclear) like Kalalau, [illegible] Drake and [illegible] and Yellowstone (okay, [illegible] or the Wyoming yoga). Their linear tendrils and transparent planes evoke immanent natural forces and emotions rather than the specifics of time and tide. *Water/Color* runs through February 25 at Slate Contemporary (473 25th St., Oakland). 510-652-4085 or SlateArtandDesign.com. — *DeWitt Cheng*

Portraits from Oakland

The *New York Times* recently anointed Oakland as one of the world's [illegible] destinations in 2012 because of its stellar restaurants and bars, so kudos to East Bay gourmets. Locals already know the non-gustatory virtues of Oaktown. For a year, Bay Area Photographers Collective members Henry Bowles, Anthony Delgado, Rall Hillebrand, John Martin, Charlotte Niel, and Gary Werner have been documenting First Friday's diverse, eclectic audience. Improvising studios in unused 25th Street retail spaces, they have captured the lively spirit of Oakland's multicultural multiethnic mix, creating an album and time capsule of the civic family — Avedons for the democratic 99 Percent. Mom, my Daddy, what did you do during Art Murmur? Just kidding. Now about reinstating those food trucks … *Portraits from Oakland* runs through Feb. 18 at PHOTO (473 25th St., Oakland). 510-847-2416 or PhotoGalleryOakland.com. — *DC*

Through Jan. 28. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

MUSEUMS

[illegible]

[illegible]

THEATER & DANCE

Brief Intermission

Oakland Ballet postpones sophomore spring season.

Oakland Ballet Company announced last Wednesday that its spring dance season will be postponed until spring 2013, citing a budget shortfall and *Nutcracker* ticket sales that fell short of projections. The company will spend the upcoming year raising funds and stabilizing its finances.

Interviewed by phone from London, Artistic Director Graham Lustig cited fiscal prudence rather than financial crisis. "I think this is the right thing to be doing, and it's preemptive," he said. The company runs on a very tight budget, and producing a spring show was simply too risky after a 50 percent drop in revenue. "Fundraising is a very steep uphill climb at the moment," Lustig said, noting that arts organizations at every level, and throughout the Bay Area, recorded similar shortfalls last year.

The board's development efforts are under way, and Oakland Ballet's other plans will move forward as scheduled. Foremost is the Spring Gala, set for Saturday, May 5, at the Kaiser Center Auditorium. Also, Saturday ballet classes for children and teens continue on the Mills College campus, and a two-week "Ballet Boot Camp" takes place in July.

Many companies rely on *The Nutcracker* for a large portion of their annual revenue, Oakland Ballet included. After the success of its 2010 premiere, the company increased the number of shows for 2011, but sales did not support the expansion. To further reduce financial risk, it will scale back to three or four performances this fall.

"We're not going to dig a deeper hole," Lustig said. "The two things that I wanted to do for the company was to reestablish its artistic identity, but do that in concert with strong fiscal responsibility." Lustig was hired in 2010 to help restore Oakland Ballet, which had recently endured several years of hardship. After folding in 2006, it was revived in 2007 by founder Ronn Guidi, only to go on hiatus after Guidi's abrupt resignation in 2009.

Founded in 1965 by Guidi, Oakland Ballet garnered popular and critical acclaim for restaging classical ballets and the groundbreaking dances of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. The postponed spring season, *Diaghilev Imagery*, is planned as an homage to that heritage and a bridge to the company's artistic future. Val Caniparoli and Amy Seiwert, San Francisco-based choreographers with national recognition, are creating new works set to the original Ballets Russes scores, and Lustig will restage his version of *Pulcinella*.

Lustig said that Caniparoli and Seiwert are committed to returning. "It's a ghastly thing to have to do, but at the same time the dancers and artists have been incredibly generous and understanding," he said. "The ballet is just being prudent, being wise, and we have every intention of coming back stronger."

— *Claudia Bauer*

COMEDY

Comedy at the Layover Weekly comedy with rotating showcases. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. Free. The Layover, 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-834-1517. OaklandLayover.com.

Comedy by Oakland/Rhonda: The 13th Vote Starring Bryant Berk and featuring [illegible]. Sat., Jan. 28, 8 p.m. $15-$20. Englander Sports Pub, 101 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-3571. EnglanderPub.com.

Comedy off Broadway's Hosted Thursday This week, The Indian Show with [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible]. Hosted by [illegible] and Samson Koletkar. Thu., Jan. 26, 8 p.m., $8-$10. 510-214-2926. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Jam House (in the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, at Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-444-7171. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Friday Night Comedy Weekly comedy hosted by LeRoy Stanfield Jr. Fridays, 8 p.m. EntityProductions.com. Black Repertory Theater, 3201 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-652-2120.

Marga's Funny Mondays Weekly comedy and variety showcase, featuring a rotating cast of comedians and hosted by local comedian Marga Gomez. Mondays, 8 p.m. $10. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way. Comedy. 510-704-8291. TheMarsh.org.

College Night: Oakland/Last Poetry Hosted by LeRoy Stanfield Jr. Ages 21 and up. Sundays, 8 p.m. EntityProductions.com. Forbidden Island Tiki Lounge/Paradise Club, 1304 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-749-0332. ForbiddenIsland.com.

The Rock With [illegible], [illegible], and [illegible]. Hosted by Joe Klocek and Samson Koletkar. Fri., Jan. 27, 8 p.m. $8-$10. 510-214-2926. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Jam House (in the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, at Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-444-7171. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Will Oakland With [illegible], Tyler Kane, and Anita Drexelberg. Hosted by Joe Klocek and Samson Koletkar. Sat., Jan. 28, 8 p.m. $8-$10. 510-214-2926. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Jam House (in the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, at Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-444-7171. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

Company C Contemporary Ballet Two live performances, led by Peter Anastos, to cap the company's tenth anniversary season. Sat., Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 29, 2 p.m. $25-$37. 925-798-0752. CompanyCBallet.org. Cañada Valley Center for the Arts, 1970 Redwood Rd., Castro Valley.

Patty Gee's Oakland Folkdance With a blend of classical, folk, and contemporary Chinese dances. For kids ages 3 and up. Sat., Jan. 28, 10:30-11 a.m. and [illegible]. Berkeley Public Library Central, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

LIVE VARIETY

Hosted to Oblivion With audience participation, magic, comedy, and mind reading by Brian Scott. Not recommended for kids under 8. Sat., Jan. 28, 2-3 p.m. $12-$15. 415-860-7164. BrianScottProductions.com. Central Stage, 3221 Central Ave., Richmond.

Flash Theater Chocolate Rock Opera: Down The Rabbit Hole with Wonderland Circus. Celebrate the birthday of *Alice in Wonderland* author Lewis Carroll with an audience-participatory rock opera featuring bubbly interpretations of the author's works. Dress as Alice glam to join the Lovenire and [illegible]. Fri., Jan. 27, 8-11:30 p.m. $10. [illegible] $15. Oakland Metro Operahouse, 630 3rd St. Sundays. 510-763-1146. OaklandMetro.org.

Vico Fidanza A live-variety show with a jaw-dropping sheen, a ridiculously sick glam-wave, a gift-wrapping tart, and a James Bond-inspired finale. Presented by Hubba Hubba Burlesque Revue. Sat., Jan. 28, 9:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. $10. 415-368-7305. Vitus, 201 Broadway, Oakland. 510-452-3470. VitusOakland.com.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

Aurora Ensemble: Winter Staged Reading Series This week: David Auburn's *Proof* directed by Donna Dillon. Tue., Jan. 31, 8 p.m. $5-$17; no one turned away for lack of funds. Live Oak Theatre, 1301 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-5999.

Arcadia Robert Estes directs a contemporary comedic drama about sex, mathematics, romance, and landscape architecture. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sun., Feb. 12, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 18. $12-$15. Live Oak Theatre, 1301 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-5999.

Body Awareness Joy Carlin directs the Bay Area premiere of Annie Baker's comedy about the fluctuation of relationships and the instability of living in times of uncertainty. Starting Jan. 27. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m.; Wednesdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Continues through Mar. 4. $30-$55. Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-843-4822. AuroraTheatre.org.

Broadway Bound Phoebe Meyer directs Neil Simon's autobiographical, coming-of-age comedy about two brothers trying to navigate their journey as professional comedy writers. Sundays, 2 p.m.; Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through Feb. 4. $20. Masquers Playhouse, 105 Park Pl., Richmond. 510-232-4031. Masquers.org.

Comedy of Age Meet actors, storytellers, and volunteers from the Stagebridge senior theatre company. 510-444-4755 ext. 122 to RSVP. Fri., Jan. 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Stagebridge.org. Uptown Body & Fender, 401 26th St., Oakland. 510-251-6000.

Dan Hoyle's The Kipling Hotel: True Misadventures of the Straight Male Ego Hoyle's one-man show chronicles his misadventures throughout the '00s, from failed attempts at working as a stripper and a gigolo to his stint as a live-in [illegible] at a retirement hotel. Sundays, 2 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:30 p.m. Continues through Feb. 12. $20-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-704-8291. TheMarsh.org.

Fences Gene Kahane directs August Wilson's exploration of race relations in 1950s Oakland. Recommended for ages 13 and up. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m.; Thu., Feb. 16, 8 p.m. Continues through Feb. 19. $19-$22. Oakland Playhouse, 1329 High St., Alameda. 510-523-1533. AltaArts.org.

the Forlorn Project Chapter 1: A Fool's Errand [illegible] Klein directs Ragged Wing Ensemble's first production of the season, the first of the group's "The Phoebe Project" series, featuring movement performance, [illegible] arts, live music, and site-specific performance. Jan. 27-28, 8 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 29, 8 p.m. $15-$30. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/219999. Oakland Academy, 1515 Oakland St., Oakland. 510-500-0801. Eventbrite.org.

PICKS

Ghost Light

Jonathan Moscone's theatrical version of himself might be slightly exaggerated, but it works well for a play about a child dealing with his father's death — especially given that Jonathan's father, former San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, was a well-known, widely respected public figure whose career kept him somewhat estranged from his children. *Ghost Light* spawned from conversations between the younger Moscone, who directed, and Berkeley Rep Artistic Director Tony Taccone, who wrote the script. Some details may have been altered for the purpose of plot, but it hews to a fairly realistic storyline: Jonathan hears about the assassination of his father first from a gelid Dianne Feinstein, speaking numbly through his television screen, then from a police officer (Peter Macon), who comes knocking at the door. He has to confront that traumatic event first in therapy, then repeatedly in dreams, then in pop culture, where the term "Twinkie defense" quickly becomes common coin, and finally as an adult, such as when he was invited to consult on set for the movie *Milk*, which lionized fellow shooting victim-turned-LGBT martyr Harvey Milk while underplaying his father's death. The play is dreamlike, sometimes ponderous, and often profoundly sweet, particularly as an encomium to San Francisco. Through February 19 at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (2025 Addison St., Berkeley). $14.50-$73. 510-647-2949 or BerkeleyRep.org. — *Rachel Swan*

Ghost Light.

Fences ® *Johnny in the Clair de Lune* Scott Fryer directs Fortune McNally's bittersweet comedy about an unlikely romance between two middle-aged "losers." Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 12. $10-$30. Greek Actors Ensemble Theatre, 1340 [illegible] St., [illegible]. 510-433-5510.

Ghost Light Jonathan Moscone directs Tony Taccone's world-premiere drama about the assassination of Mayor George Moscone. No performances on select dates; call or check theater website. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m.; Thu., Feb. 16, 2 p.m. Continues through Feb. 19. $14.50-$73. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949. BerkeleyRep.org.

Otello Hosted Presented by the Hosted Opera Project. At 2001 [illegible] Ave., Berkeley. Sun., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. $5-$15. 510-[illegible].

Pitts Plot Mark Buckland directs his dramatization about the first play ever performed in the US, which took a satirical stab at the King of England. Wednesdays, Thursdays, 7 p.m.; Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Jan. 29. $30-$27. Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org.

Rumors The Berkeley Playhouse Conservatory presents the classic Lerner-Ross? love and Romance in the 1950s. Fri., Jan. 27, 7 p.m.; Sat., Jan. 28, 2 & 7 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 29, 2 p.m. $15-$20. BerkeleyPlayhouse.org. Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-8542. JuliaMorgan.org.

Of Mice and Men An OSA Theatre Wendy event presentation, featuring by [illegible] [illegible], of Steinbeck's story about [illegible] and Depression-era Anbrosi. Jan. 30-Feb. 4, 7 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 4, 2 p.m. $5-$10. 510-704-6080. Oakland School for the Arts, Black Box Theatre, 530 18th St., Oakland. 510-873-8800. OakArts.org. ●

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COMEDY REVIEW

A FUNNY HUSTLE FOR SYLVAN PRODUCTIONS

The Bay Area's newest comedy moguls are young, enterprising, 24-hour party people

By Rachel Swan

Rory Scovel was a rare treat for Oaklanders.

Rory Scovel's intro music — a rousing, high-volume recording of "Higher Love" by Steve Winwood — wasn't the only highlight of last Tuesday's special Sylvan Productions comedy night at Vitus. But it was certainly a high point. Particularly when Scovel, an absurdist funnyman from Los Angeles, led all of us in a ridiculously animated Winwood singalong. "Everybody!" he yelled, drill-coach style, as we obediently clapped our hands and banged our imaginary tambourines. *Bring me a higher love!* sang the hipsters in attendance, fumbling the major third harmonies and barely missing the high notes. Scovel stood before us like a counselor at church camp, feigning just enough enthusiasm not to get fired. As the music's last chorus evaporated, he changed tone. "Yeah, that's probably what Rick Perry usually comes out to," he said.

It was a rare treat to have Scovel, who is widely considered one of the fastest rising stars of the alt-comic world — alongside Moshe Kasher, Hannibal Buress, and Brent Weinbach — bowling at a medium-size club in Oakland. And with transgendered comic Natasha Muse, sometime *Express* sportswriter Sean Keane, surprise guest Chris Garcia, and host Amy Miller all booked as supporting acts, it seemed like a slam dunk. It was no surprise to see both the ground and mezzanine floors packed when the show started at 8:30 p.m. Oakland has long harbored a nascent comedy scene, but new showcases like this one indicate that it might finally be getting off the ground.

Show Details
Sylvan hosts comedy nights every Thursday at Vitus (201 Broadway, Oakland). 7 p.m. $10. SylvanProductions.com

Sylvan Productions is helping that process along — rather improbably, since its members don't look at all like typical moguls or arts boosters. They're actually a loose collection of young, self-made event producers with Yahoo email accounts, whose operation is fueled by impetuosity and cheap beer. That said, they've managed to bring high-profile entertainment to the East Bay on a fairly consistent basis, with last week's Scovel show preceded by a special Hannibal Buress appearance in November. They've also booked Fillmore hip-hop artist Rappin' 4-Tay to headline on February 24. Their regular Thursday shows feature local lineups but sometimes include surprise guests, like Seattle-based quipster Barbara Holm, who slipped in unannounced after her Sketchfest showcase last week.

What's perhaps most interesting about Sylvan is that it appears to operate on chewing gum and wire. Figuratively speaking, sure, but that's actually not much of an overstatement. The eight or nine core producers all live in a giant house in San Francisco's Richmond District where, according to company figurehead Justin Gomes, there's a low-level party happening at all times. The living room couches often get colonized by traveling comedians (or most recently, a group of Hungarian tourists), and they've converted the ground level into a production studio with a green screen. Since the house is just spitting distance from Dirty Trix Saloon, a popular Clement Street nightclub where Sylvan hosts Wednesday and Saturday events, they usually have to accommodate the after-party crowd as well. Gomes said that when he woke up at 5 a.m. this morning to go to his restaurant job, famed stoner comic Andrew Holmgren was sauntering downstairs, beer in hand, with another bleary-eyed guest. They accosted Gomes for leaving so early on a Monday. "Hey man," Holmgren said. "The party's still going."

Gomes launched Sylvan as a sketch comedy and improv group with several friends who all attended Liberty High School in Brentwood. Their idea at the time was to serve as a substitute for other comparably exorbitant after-school theater programs. The company went on hiatus after everyone graduated, but a few of the old core members decided to revive it in 2009, once they'd all moved to San Francisco and began doing comedy in earnest. Now they produce events almost every night of the week. Sylvan is top-heavy with personnel, and all of them have odd, cumbersome titles (OJ Patterson calls himself the "haphazard line producer" and refers to Amy Miller as the "Vitus major domo," though she often defers to "the man in charge" — presumably Gomes). But at the end of the day, they seem to be prospering. That's no small feat in an area long considered a comedy desert.

Gomes' advice for other fledgling producers? Start amassing capital, even if you're working on a shoestring budget. "We've pretty much spent the amount of money that we would have spent on a college education on Sylvan," he confessed. Also: Surround yourself with good people. Meaning people you'd trust to make business decisions, and people you wouldn't mind working with 24/7 in a job that bleeds into your social life — and, in this case, your living space. Miller added that the best way to build a fan base is to "book for funny."

And when in doubt, remember the words of Steve Winwood. ●

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

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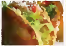

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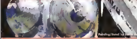
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LECTURES & LIT

Joshua Mohr and the Mission of Fiction

In *Damascus*, the local author pays homage to the San Francisco neighborhood

The real-life Damascus is said to be a beautiful city — one of the oldest in the world, a desert oasis built around the banks of the Barada River at the foot of a mountain range. More recently, years of war and civic unrest have left the city's old buildings cracked and decaying, the physical splendor somewhat muted by the conditions therein.

The fictional Damascus — a Mission District bar that serves as the setting for Joshua Mohr's novel of the same name — revels in that same sort of broken beauty tinged with danger and sadness, rough and considerably around the edges over time but no less real. The walls are painted black, and the place is populated by fascinating, self-destructive, often pseudonymous characters — Shambles, a craggy-faced freelance hooker who gives hand jobs in the bathroom for twenty bucks a pop; No Eyebrows, a swiftly decaying cancer patient who has abandoned his family in order to die anonymously; proprietor Owen, an ex-alcoholic who's taken to wearing a Santa suit year-round — who come together and break apart under a ceiling of shattered mirrors meant to look like stars.

Joshua Mohr

All told, Mohr said in a recent interview, the novel, his third, is intended to be a "love letter to the Mission," warts and all. "With this book," he continued, "I wanted to create something a little more grounded in the outside world, a little less internal than my previous books. So I think if I've done my job right, the Mission District comes across as a character in the book. I wanted the setting to inhabit the story in a way that it's a living, breathing place." Mission very much accomplished, no pun intended. To anyone who has spent much time in the neighborhood or, especially, its dives, the novel will ring particularly true. Mohr — who has been living in the neighborhood for some ten years, and who will read on Friday, January 27, at A Great Good Place for Books (6120 LaSalle Ave., Oakland) — certainly has a gift for description. The book reads like a heightened version of reality, one where all the characters are just a bit more exaggerated than they would be in real life, but no less recognizable: "off-duty mariachis getting man, tone deaf with each tilt of tequila, wearing matching black outfits spotted with silver buckles that made them look like decorated war veterans. Insipid twentysomething Caucasian boys, their cheeks stuffed with carbohydrates and college degrees, wowed by their own flickering wits." Syl, a slightly down-on-her-luck political artist whose decision to mount a subversive-for-the-sake-of-it art exhibition in the bar drives much of the book's plot, should ring more than a few bells for any Bay Area native.

Damascus is populated with damaged, eminently lovable, terrifyingly relatable characters — and, as such, is a metaphor for the city writ large: a haven for outcasts, a different kind of oasis in a different kind of desert. 7 p.m., free. 510-339-8210 or GreatGoodPlace.Indiebound.com

— *Ellen Cushing*

LECTURES

Allison Harvey, Ph.D: "Sleep: How Much Do We Need? How Do We Get What We Need?" The UC Berkeley psychology department faculty member and director of the Golden Bear Sleep and Mood Research Clinic discusses her research on the relationship between sleep and mood, and on treatments to improve sleep. Wed., Feb. 1, 7 p.m. Windrush School, 1800 Elm St., El Cerrito. 510-[illegible].

Andy Katz: "Adrift @ the Mouth of Kyoto" The EBMUD director and Sierra Club delegate to the recent UN climate negotiations in Durban discusses the importance of state and local work for climate protection and more. Q&A and discussion follow. Thu., Jan. 26, 7-8 p.m. free. Ecology Center, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-2220. EcologyCenter.org.

Berkeley Entrepreneurs Forum: Innovation Entrepreneurs @ Mood With [illegible] and CEO of [illegible], [illegible] SoundHound's Keyvan Mohajer, and Larry Marcus of Walden Venture Capital. In the Anderson Auditorium. For more information: Lester@Haas.Berkeley.edu or 510-642-4255. Thu., Jan. 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. $25-$30. [illegible] Haas School of Business, 2220 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley. 510-642-7588. Haas.Berkeley.edu.

Deborah Koff-Chapin: "Touch Drawing" The artist and originator of the "Touch Drawing" process shares stories of the method's formulation and technique. Sat., Jan. 28, 7:30-9 p.m. 510-[illegible]. TouchDrawing.com. John F. Kennedy University Arts and Consciousness Gallery, 2956 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-649-0499. JFKU.edu/Gallery.

[illegible]: "Small Town, Big Changes: The Remarkable History of El Sobrante and San Pablo Dam Road" The author and historian discusses and shares vintage photos from the new Arcadia Publishing Co. book. Wed., Feb. 1, 6:30-7:30 p.m. 510-[illegible]. [illegible] El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way, El Sobrante. 510-374-3991. CCCLib.org/locations/ElSobrante.html.

[illegible]: "Is 2012 the Dead End or the Crossroads?" The Berkeley Energy and Resources Collaborative sponsors a discussion about the Kyoto Protocol and the move to "Carbon 2.0" in the building 50 auditorium. Fri., Jan. 27, 12:30-2 p.m. 510-642-9580. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, UC Berkeley Campus, Berkeley. 510-486-4000. LBL.gov.

Forum: "The Renaissance of Local News" UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism presents a discussion with media industry analyst Ken Doctor, [illegible] and more. RSVP [illegible] 510-642-3394 or [illegible]. Fri., Jan. 27, 3 p.m. [illegible] UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Heather at Heather Farm: [illegible] Elizabeth Murray The author, photographer, and painter gives a garden-inspired lecture about her work helping to restore and photograph Monet's Gardens, along with other stories about her [illegible]. Thu., Jan. 26, 9:30 a.m. $35. Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-947-1678. GardensHF.org.

[illegible]: "The Lost Sanctuaries of Queen Nefertiti: Royal Worship @ the Edge of King Akhenaten" The visiting lecturer from the American Council of Learned Societies and Post Doctoral Faculty Fellow leads a discussion in room 370. For more information: [illegible]Berkeley.edu. Sun., Jan. 29, 3 p.m. [illegible] Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. Berkeley.edu.

[illegible]: "Textual Conspiracies: Walter Benjamin, Idolatry and Political Theory" The associate professor of political theory at SF State discusses his book about Benjamin's critique of the "fetishization of political symbols and signs," and his book *Divine Violence: Walter Benjamin & the Eschatology of Sovereignty*. Thu., Jan. 26, 6-7:30 p.m. University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

[illegible]: "Creating a Whole New Be- [illegible] Breaking News on the Connected Internet" The head of digital delivery at the BBC World Service discusses the BBC's new approach to broadcasting online news as [illegible] and how to remedy such obstacles. Room 2[illegible], Fri., Jan. 27, 1:10-2:30 p.m. 510-642-[illegible]. South Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Lowell Bergman: An 'Insider' Perspective on International Investigative [illegible] The *New York Times* reporter and

PICKS

Neil Smelser

C[illegible] recent events, this year's [illegible] the annual Clark Kerr lecture series — which aims to [illegible] and elucidate the role [illegible] higher education in American society at large — feels particularly salient. In a talk entitled "The Play of Continuity and Crisis," famed sociologist and longtime Cal professor Neil Smelser discusses the role of social movements in the realm of higher education (and vice versa). Fittingly enough, the talk, which repeats on Tuesday Jan. 31 and Saturday Feb. 4, takes place at the Berkeley Art Museum (2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley) — *yards away from Sproul Plaza*, the epicenter of the Free Speech and Occupy Cal movements. 4 p.m., free. CSHE.Berkeley.edu/events/kerrlectures — *Ellen Cushing*

Sandra Gilbert

Any[illegible] ever read Joan Didion[illegible], Carol Oates can attest [illegible] visceral sensitive portrait of grief. Add to that list brilliant sufferers the poet and Berkeley resident Sandra Gilbert, whose latest poetry collection *Aftermath* contends beautifully with loss as well as "the complex superstitions of endurance, acquiescence, and rebirth that, with luck, mark the aftermath of sorrow." She reads at Diesel (5433 College Ave., Oakland) on Thursday, Jan. 26. 7 p.m., free. DieselBookstore.com — *E.C.*

Susan Sherman

In *The L[illegible] R[illegible]*, by debut novelist Susan Sherman, protagonist Berta Alshonsky falls in love in the Jewish town of Mozny. This would be uncomplicated, except that the object of her affection is a member of the Jewish Workers League who smuggles arms to the shtetls to protect the Russian countryside from pogroms, or violent, organized attacks. It could also seem far-fetched, except that the tale is based on the experiences of Sherman's grandmother. She reads at A Great Good Place for Books (6120 La Salle Ave., Oakland) on Thursday, Jan. 26. 5 p.m., free. 510-339-8210 or GreatGoodPlaceforBooks.com — *Holly McDede*

Sandra Gilbert.

Bin Ramke and Hillary Gravendyk

Poets Bin Ramke and Hillary Gravendyk read at Moe's Books (2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley) on Wednesday Feb. 1, for Omnidawn Night, a celebration of four new releases from Richmond's Omnidawn Press. In his poetry Ramke somehow combines an investigative history of schizophrenia, mathematical logic, and Greek prosody to discuss heroines Katrina and Rita. Gravendyk is the two-time winner of the Eleanor Prize in Poetry. Right now she's working on *Chronic Poetics*, an exploration of intersubjectivity and embodiment in various poetic works. 7:30 p.m., free. 510-849-2087 or MoesBooks.com — *H.M.*

veteran [illegible] producer discusses his career in an interview with [illegible] Books member and KQED news anchor [illegible] Audience (I&A Branch). Thu., Jan. 26, 7:30-9 p.m. $10. 510-642-0480. [illegible]Spring2012SpeakerSeries.EventBrite.com. International House, 2299 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley. 510-642-9490.

Paul [illegible] Petersen: "Green Berkeley with Light" The Technical University of Denmark speaker discusses the benefits of light emitting diodes. In room 200. Fri., Jan. 27, 12-1 p.m. 510-643-4508. [illegible] Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: "Embracing Israel/Palestine" Mon., Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m. $10. Ferguson Room, Rockridge. 5500 College Ave., Oakland. 510-652-0250. [illegible]Bookstore.com.

Steven A. Cook, "The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square" The Institute of International Studies sponsors a discussion relating the world's current gaze on Egypt to a similar focus a half-century ago. In room 223. For more information: [illegible]@berkeley.edu or 510-643-2472. Mon., Jan. 30, 12-1:30 p.m. [illegible] Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

LITERARY EVENTS

Shadows, Roots, Posts and Thirsts With [illegible]. Wed., Feb. 1, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

The B.S.P. Social Wicked Book Society The club's first meeting, for ages 18 and up. Sun., Jan. 29, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Bilingual Family Storytime Stories and activities for the whole family, presented in English and Mandarin. First and fourth Saturday of every month, 10-11:30 a.m. Free. Oakland Public Library, Asian Branch, 388 9th St., Suite 190, Oakland. 510-238-3400. OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] Book and Speakeasy 3:5 Thursdays [illegible] Society Mo'Betta [illegible] Prophet hosts a weekly evening of [illegible], dancing, poetry, rap, food and more. With food, drink specials, and music by DJ [illegible]. Free before 10 p.m. Thursdays, 10:30 p.m. free-$5. EastSide Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629. EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

[illegible] The poet [illegible] her work in the [illegible] (2025). Thu., Jan. 26, 6:30-8 p.m. Wheeler Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

[illegible] Calling: Students' Essays Local students read aloud from essays [illegible]. Tue., Jan. 31, 7 p.m. Barnes & Noble, 1149 S. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-947-0373. BarnesAndNoble.com.

Playreaders Weekly group for adults to read from great plays, changing parts frequently. Fourth floor Story Room. Wednesdays, noon. Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

The Berkeley [illegible] Young writer [illegible] Frost presents her work in the context of veteran writer who has inspired her. Fri., Jan. 27, 5:30 p.m. free-$7. Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

Terry Wolverton and [illegible] Poets A Poetry Flash reading. Sun., Jan. 29, 3 p.m. Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Tyrone Williams The author visits Mills College as part of the school's Contemporary Writers Series. Tue., Jan. 31, 5:30-6:45 p.m. 510-430-2230. Mills Hall Living Room, Mills College, Oakland. 510-430-2255. www.mills.edu

Valley of Shadows & Thirsts, View & Book An 8-essay with photography by Ken Light and text by Melanie Light. Through May 15. Center for Photography, Northgate Hall, Graduate School of Journalism, Berkeley.

Vegan Book [illegible] First meeting of the Book club, to determine what book to discuss for March. Wed., Feb. 1, 8 p.m. Nature's Express, 1823 Solano Ave., Berkeley. 510-527-5331. NaturesExpress.com.

Write for Your Life Writing as meditation, whereby participants write in response to a reading at the beginning of the session. [illegible]. Mondays, 9:15-11:45 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., [illegible]. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Bankruptcy Lawyer in the Library [illegible] begins at 5:45 p.m. First Wednesday of every month, 6-8 p.m. Free. Oakland Public Library, Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134. OaklandLibrary.org.

Earth Awareness and Cultural Change Reality The Fellowship of Humanity [illegible] a screening of [illegible] & the Berkeley [illegible] talk by [illegible]. Tue., Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m. $5 donation. Humanist Hall, 390 27th St., Oakland. 510-451-5818. HumanistHall.org.

Food Not Bombs General Meeting Planning meeting for ongoing Food Not Bombs [illegible] and Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. free. Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-540-0751.

Free Book Exchange Give and get free books of all genres. Saturdays, Sundays, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. free. Bay Area Free Book Exchange, 10620 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-710-1206. [illegible]

Truth and Unity Forum for KPFA Pacifica A community forum, sponsored by the [illegible] Social Justice Committee, to discuss the viability of KPFA [illegible], in the face of financial struggles. Event will be videotaped. Mon., Jan. 30, 7-10 p.m., donations accepted for KPFA. Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824. BFUU.org.

SPOKEN WORD

The Berkeley Slam Spoken word featuring [illegible] and [illegible] Schneider, with [illegible]. Hosted by [illegible]. Up to $250 in cash prizes. Wed., Feb. 1, 8 p.m. $8. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082. StarryPloughPub.com.

The Blue Candle A weekly open mic for up-and-coming spoken word artists, [illegible] and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m., free. [illegible], 5807 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1935. [illegible]

Saturday Night Special: East Bay Open Mic A monthly open mic hosted by [illegible]. Last Saturday of every month, 7-9 p.m. free. Nick's Lounge, 3018 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-653-6420. NicksLounge.com.

Speak, Word Art Open-Mic Night All [illegible] are invited to share their work. Arrive early to sign up. Second and Fourth Fridays, 7:30 p.m. free. [illegible]. Zocalo Coffeehouse, 645 [illegible] Ave., San Leandro. 510-483-0108. ZocaloCoffeehouse.com.

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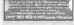

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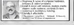

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AQUARIUM AGE

THE RETRO-ZONE: PART 2

For the week of January 25-31, 2012

By Raffee Finn

Nothing moves quickly this week so put aside expectations of immediate results and instead spend some time adjusting your personal pace to a slower, more deliberate and sometimes hesitant beat. Mars, the planet that symbolizes motion, is seemingly moving behind instead of ahead, and it's the first of several planets to place us in the 2012 Retro-Zone. When astrologers say a planet is "retrograde," they mean that it appears to be moving backwards in the sky relative to Earth's orbital position around the Sun. And although we know retrograde motion is an illusion, the effects often feel all too real. Any planetary retrograde phase is about review, reflection and reconsideration, and because Mars symbolizes action, many of us will be revisiting a wide variety of previous choices. Unfortunately, neither retrospection nor introspection is a Martian strong suit, so don't be surprised if you're resistant to examining past decisions. The biggest problem is likely to be frustration, yours and others', as daily life turns into an obstacle course of second-guessing and changing plans. Be sure to set your personal compass on "patience" — we're all going to need plenty of it to handle the Martian fallout.

Mars Retrograde began on January 23 and continues through April 14 (it actually goes direct close to midnight on April 13.) Approximately every two-plus-years, Mars goes retrograde for approximately two or three months. Mars symbolizes muscle in all its forms: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. For some that translates into athletics and competition; for others it's about heart; for even more, the presence of Mars is experienced as ambition and the need to succeed. From a spiritual perspective, Mars signifies self-actualization and is best understood as the arms and legs of the ego. Mars is the principal that allows us to differentiate from others and to individuate. It takes Mars 687 Earth days to orbit around the Sun. Add in the time of its retrograde phase and every two or so years each of us experiences a Mars Return, when it returns to the position it occupied at our moment of birth. The first Mars Return occurs when we're two years old. It's the astrological explanation for the terrible twos, when we start saying "no." And what we mean by that "no" is "I am not you."

During the next few months of Mars Retrograde, we're likely to hear a lot of "no," particularly in the political arena, as more and more people regress to the terrible twos, and tantrums replace statements of policy. But Mars Retrograde is just as likely to inspire mature resistance, and its power is best demonstrated by the ability to take a stand. Given the many injustices in the world that require a strong united "no," the next few months of Mars Retrograde could inspire an abundance of protests and demonstrations.

As the coming weeks unfold, merging your personal stride with the retrograde rhythm will take skill. And there's no need to hurry; we're only in the first week of a many-month/many-planet retrograde expedition, a celestial trek that's likely to require almost constant tweaking to find the right attitude, inside and out.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that too.

ARIES Be aware that whatever you initiate during the retrograde is likely to require more care and attention than you're used to providing. Be willing to integrate patience at a deeper level and you'll emerge successful.

TAURUS In addition to strong creative urges, you're also likely to experience deep romantic longings. Be prepared for old flames to rekindle contact or a new infatuation to catch fire.

GEMINI The retrograde also focuses on family issues, so be prepared for plenty of dynamic fluctuations as spouses, children, parents, siblings and all variety of family members vie for your attention. As you handle their needs, try not to neglect your own.

CANCER You're likely to find yourself saying more than you want to but unable to stop yourself from blurting what you feel. While some of what's said is unnecessary, it's still an opportunity to refine your communication skills.

LEO Continue to pay close attention to your finances and be determined to distinguish necessary expenses from extravagance. Take your time and do not assume this sorting process is simple.

VIRGO The secret of your success resides in your ability to step into a leadership position than to do whatever adjustments are necessary to perfect your role. Be willing to grow and you'll handle this phase with ease.

LIBRA You're likely to feel more than a little confined during Mars Retrograde, so be sure to be physical. Finding wholesome outlets to express pent-up energy will help you to maintain your mental health.

SCORPIO Groups play a large role during this retrograde, especially gatherings of people with similar sensibilities. Notice what's being reflected back to you about yourself.

SAGITTARIUS There's actually no need to be confrontational — there's only the need to seize the moment and step into your power. Be polite, but don't hold back.

CAPRICORN Mars retrograde also stirs a desire to expand your personal philosophy and spiritual beliefs. Use this time to explore various traditions and to consider alternate and opposite points of view.

AQUARIUS This week the emphasis is on cooperation, particularly in relationships that involve strong egos. Rely on your egalitarian perspective and you'll find the right tone for shared endeavors.

PISCES The emphasis continues to be on relationship issues, with particular focus on reviewing previous patterns in order to discern what works and what doesn't. Be honest with yourself, but also be kind. ●

For More Info

Raffee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-837-9284 write PO Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com or e-mail Raffee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2012 by Raffee Finn

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- Crowdfunding for local (food) economies
- Worker co-op model - history, organization, finance, and law
- B corporation model - solving social and environmental problems
- 21st century banking
- Campaign finance reform
- Facing the loss of redevelopment funding
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- Slow Money
- The sharing economy and cottage food legislation
- Bikenomics
- New innovation presentation by LocalOn
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Owners the Ayyad family make their home in the nearby city of El Cerrito have nailed the nuances of creating a great place to take friends and family in a location that has been a revolving door of failed restaurants.

"Running a restaurant is hard," says Ramzy Ayyad the General manager. "You have to keep things interesting and new, yet consistent enough to keep the regulars coming back." After flirting with a weekend breakfast menu Ramzy says Zaki will settle for a steady quality menu for the year with the organic rotisserie chicken, rotating nightly authentic Middle Eastern specialties like Melokhia, Makloobe, and Mensaf to name a few.

The unique high quality menu items are one reason patrons remain loyal to Zaki. The other is a personal, intimate and cozy evening under the watchful eye of experienced family members. The Ayyads started in food 40 years ago at Fred's Market Deli in Berkeley before they started turning kabobs and spinning the rotisserie at Zaki Kabob House. "It's been a slight adjustment going from deli to full service restaurant," says Ramzy. "The restaurant scene is a little more personable and charming than the deli was."

Knowing first names and favorite customer dishes, the Ayyads take pride in respecting every regulars' unique request. "The regulars are the life blood of restaurants, if you don't see familiar faces then something is wrong," says Ramzy.

Other than great food and cool vibes, and live music on Saturday nights Zaki Kabob House offers its guests unique extras like a rewards program, Halal high quality farm fresh ingredients, gluten free dishes and a wide variety of vegan and vegetarian options.

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FOOD & DRINK

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Chris Duffy

NEUTERED SPICE

Lin Jia's attempts at high-brow Asian are noble but fall flat.

By Jesse Hirsch

There's a gleam of the picturesque in Marcia Lam's culinary evolution. She's the adult child of Chinese immigrants, a fifteen year veteran of her parents' greasy takeout restaurant in Hayward. Over the years, Lam grew conscious of food sourcing and health issues, absorbing the Bay Area ethos through prolonged exposure. And when she opened her own restaurant Lin Jia just over a year ago in Oakland's Lakeshore district, she scrapped MSG and grease in favor of mindful preparation, organic produce, and free-range meats.

I was ready.

This Christmas, my family trekked to a dingy Chinese dive in rural New England. Wedged between a trucker motel and a Cineplex, it boasted too-bright lights, frayed carpeting, and a dragon-and-sword design motif. We ordered classics like beef and broccoli, General Tso's chicken, and the de rigueur gutbomb, a Pu Pu platter. While these deep-fried duck sauce vehicles weren't without their appeal — I will never turn my back on a crab rangoon — we left feeling logy and oil-slicked.

Aesthetically, you would never mistake Lin Jia for this kind of place. With a design sense that runs toward Asian minimalist, the sharply lit interior is a study in restraint. Ceilings are tall, wooden tables are bare, and sharp geometric angles define the layout. An open kitchen helms the back, with a marble-topped dining counter running along its edge. Despite a few paper lanterns and a Buddha statue near the bathroom, it would only take a few tweaks to convert Lin Jia to a wine bar or an upscale sandwich shop. It's a truly neutral space, well-suited for the food.

Lin Jia boasts a rangy menu meandering through Asian countries on a path that mirrors Lam's own globe-trotting. Korean fried chicken, Japanese tempura, and "street food" from Hanoi are sprinkled amongst the Cantonese noodles and Mongolian beef.

Wonton soup often seems like a salty throwaway with pinched little dumplings and a few sad veggie pieces slumped up at the bottom. Lin Jia's version comes from "Auntie's" recipe (the menu is riddled with family member shout-outs) and let me shuffle the sum of its parts to a rich but lightly salted stock. Billowy pork dumplings shimmied like manta rays. Shiitake and carrot slices, plump rice shrimp, and wee baby bok choy eddied around in the clear broth. It's a soup to remember.

Buddha's curry was a stir-fried toss of tofu, snap peas, potatoes, carrots, and eggplant. Everything was cooked to al dente perfection, but the store-bought green curry was milquetoast. You know those hot pepper symbols next to spicier menu items? Don't believe the hype.

Spicy Canton noodles were tightly wound concentric bundles of rice noodles, stir-fried to an agreeable chew with a supporting cast of veggies, including bean sprouts, cabbage, celery, carrots, onions, scallions, broccoli, and a bit of jalapeño. Again, hot chili notes were all but imperceptible in the mushroom-based sauce.

Pumpkin tempura is pretty basic, cubes of kabocha squash lightly battered, salted, and quick-fried. The new anchovy and broccoli dish is essentially a huge tumble of broccoli, green onions, and kalamata olive halves bathed in a nearly imperceptible anchovy dressing (fish bits break down during the stir fry). Wrinkled beans, a smoky Szechuan dish with garlic and chilies, was savory but again failed to deliver the promised burn.

The Lin Jia chicken requires 24 hours advance notice to order, allowing Lam to pick up a whole Mary's bird from Berkeley Bowl. The sweet, sesame-flecked skin was crispy, the meat moist and flavorful. Considering its $20 price tag, however, I'd recommend skipping it. You can do better than chicken on a plate.

If you're feeling flush, the kao rou is a far finer choice. In the center of the dish lies a stack of crisp pork belly rectangles next to a tangle of cilantro and sawn green onion reeds. Ringing the plate are steamed rice buns, folded over in two. What's going on here? It's a DIY pork bun! The three-cooked (steamed, fried, braised) pork belly had a crispy/fatty mouthfeel, topped with hoisin and the aromatic greens in a pillowed bun.

The fish of the day, a whole steamed rockfish, came with some tableside theatrics. Our server dispassionately removed the spine with the sure hand of a surgeon, then deftly folded the fish back together as if nothing was missing. She then basted the sizzling carcass with a few spoonfuls of soy ginger garlic sauce and was gone. Fun to watch, less fun to eat, the fish was dry and tough, a curious result from a steam preparation.

Korean fried chicken, a top seller, was medium-battered and speckled with sesame seeds. I expected wings and thighs but this was a sticky heap of moist white-meat tenders (paging General Tso). The marinade held notes of honey and soy — pleasant if uninspired.

After two visits, the dishes were not seared in my brain. I found myself re-visiting the menu to recall what we'd eaten. Like the stark decor, much of Lin Jia's fare was afflicted with a studied neutrality. Instead of assaulting you with artificial and deep-fried flavors, Lam scaled it way back. Nothing garish or over-seasoned, but also (dare I say) nothing passionate? Lin Jia's clean, expert cookery can resemble a piano concerto that's technically proficient but soulless.

That said, you could do much worse. Service is solicitous, if occasionally aloof. Price points aren't egregiously higher than lower-brow Chinese joints (the kao rou and the whole chicken are rare outliers). A Lin Jia staffer provides lovely garnish on many dishes, including flourishes like maple leaves and hollowed-out carrots filled with wildflowers. And though the cuisine may not commandeer your heart and mind, it also won't linger in your digestive tract. No one likes a beef and broccoli hangover. ◆

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

Lin Jia Asian Kitchen
3437 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland
510-835-8322 or LinJiaKitchen.com
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Sample Menu

Pumpkin Tempura	$7
Spicy Canton Noodles	$8
Dumpling Soup	$8
Buddha's Curry	$10
Korean Fried Chicken	$14

WHAT THE FORK

HITTING PAY DIRT AT DOUBLE D BBQ

The wait was worth it. Also: Tina Tamale takes over Guerrilla Grub's cart.

By Jesse Hirsch

If you recall, I've spent the last few months unsuccessfully courting Oakland's Double D BBQ. The elusive dive with the storied reputation was always closed when I stopped by; they never responded to voicemails and emails; and owner/chef Duane Orr wouldn't react to my overt attempts to smoke him (barbecue, guys) out of seclusion. I was dying to try the legendary brisket and links, but my dignity was suffering.

Eventually I cued up "I Will Survive" on the MP3 player and moved on. Until, in a quiet moment last week, I got reflective. The hurt of my unrequited advances had faded to a dull ache; I was ready to give it another go. Keeping expectations low, I took out my phone and punched in the familiar number. Two rings later, a gruff male voice:

"Hello, Double D."

"Um, yes, hi, hello. Are you, uh, open?"

"We're open until 5, or until we run out of meat."

"Cool, very cool. I mean, yes! I'm going to drive over as quick as I can. Please stay open. Please. Thank you. Bye. Thank you."

"Okay."

The traffic gods cleared a special path for me that afternoon, and I was at Double D within 45 seconds. The interior was dark and cold, and the young woman behind the counter wore a parka with the hood up.

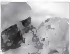
The decor follows a "put it on the wall" aesthetic: tiki masks, fox pelts, a Batman Forever poster, steer horns, Raiders pennants, a Spanish suit of armor, electric guitars, a dreamcatcher, and Manny Pavich holding court on a flatscreen.

I ordered the $5 sandwich and a side meal deal: brisket and potato salad. When I asked to sit at the deserted counter, the woman (who I was later introduced to as the "Little D" in Double D BBQ) paused for a long beat, then shrugged resignedly.

Duane Orr (aka Big D), a red-faced, burly dude in his early fifties wearing a Raiders cap and wraparound shades, emerged from out of the kitchen. We were soon bantering about the former prostitute motel next to Double D, the sub-par treatment that comes from electric smokers, and Oakland's wealth of great murals. Under Orr's chatty eye, I ate my brisket.

Burnt edges and generous smoke rings crowned strings of unctuously fatty meat, a perfect balance of chewy and crisp. The sweet and spicy house-made sauce was solid, but it was like an old food writer's cliché: "The meat was so good it didn't need ______." Along with the ribs from Slow Hand BBQ in Concord, this was hands-down the best barbecue I've had on the West Coast.

After I finished eating the sandwich and the mushy potato salad side, we took a tour of the Double D estate. The roomy back patio was lousy with potted plants, pink flamingos, and festive murals: a hot destination for the summer months (especially when Orr snags his beer license). I checked out the solid old Backwoods natural charcoal and hickory smokers, fired up at 4 a.m. every morning. We even visited Orr's friend at Weiner Works, a new organic hot dog shop in Double D's old location on International Boulevard. Before I left, Orr loaded me up with some soft all-beef links, a smooth meat blend that skews more towards ground beef than offal and scraps.



Double D's brisket and potato salad JESSE HIRSCH

My ruffled feathers had been smoothed, and I even learned why I had so much bad luck visiting previously: Double D completely shut down for several weeks last fall, Orr's frustrated response to the massive 12th Street reconstruction project (he's currently trying to get compensation from the city).

Orr's right: It's dicey figuring out how to navigate construction detours to find this tiny little nugget at 1240 1st Avenue. But it's a small price to pay for barbecue this good.

Tina Tamale Buys Guerrilla Grub's Cart

After Elisabeth August gave up mobile food in disgust in early December (see her comments in this week's Letters section), her Guerrilla Grub cart went on Craigslist. Don't worry, everyone: It's staying in the East Bay.

For the last six months, Tina "Tamale" Ramos has been scouting out carts to peddle her popular tamales. Long active at special events and festivals, she operated from a tented vendor booth, requiring an hour to set up and another hour to break down. "I wanted to spend more of my time actually selling food," Ramos said.

After "putting it out in the universe" that she'd like a mobile cart, she stumbled on August's Craigslist ad. Though the women had known each other for years, Ramos had no idea it was August's listing. "It feels like it was meant to be," she said.

Ramos hopes to have the new cart up and running by late February, early March at the latest. She has been talking with Karen Hester (Bites Off Broadway) and Zac Schurman (Doe's of the Bay) about possibly vending at their events once Oakland's temporary food pod ordinance goes into effect. She is also talking to her friend Peter Jackson, chef at Toast, about selling some of his sausages from the cart. ●

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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Chinese

Chef Lau's

301 8th St., Oakland, 510-832-3688. Table of four for dinner? Might take awhile. Chef Lau's is packed with families — big families, loud and happy and sucking up noodles. This homey, rough-around-the-edges Chinatown restaurant specializes in Cantonese seafood dishes like salt-and-pepper lobster and steamed rock cod, some of it straight from the tank, and succulent hot pots. $

China Village

1335 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-525-2285. China Village's Sichuan food is bombastically spicy. It's intelligently spicy, with layers on layers of tingly, fragrant food. The owners are enthusiastic about sharing the real Sichuan food with patrons, and they're great about making recommendations and encouraging exploration. Specialties include the tea-smoked duck, China Village special lamb, fire-bursted tripe, and the ultra-spicy Sichuan spicy boiled beef. Don't get rice unless your palate needs extra quenching — it's more southern Chinese than Sichuan. Instead, accompany your meal with cold noodles or sesame flatbread. $-$$

Da Lian

2011 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-1883. Chef/owner Bosil Zeng grew up in Dalian, a seaport in the north of China fixated by lamb, wok-baked sesame bread, and serious garlic. Those things spark Zeng's menu, too, especially lamb with Chinese pickled cabbage, an enormous soup that balances the yin of house-made pickles with the musky yang of lamb fat. Order carefully. While the chef's northern Chinese fare catches fire, the bulk of his menu is neighborhood-takeout-grade Cantonese. $

DAIMO Chinese Restaurant

3288 Pierce St., Richmond, 510-527-3888. DAIMO manages to be everything to everyone. The 300-item menu contains hundreds of variations on low-priced Cantonese noodle dishes, soups, and congee (rice porridge), as well as costlier dinner entrées. The restaurant is sparkling clean, fast, and fresh, but don't expect white-tablecloth style or service: it's hard to track down the overworked servers. Especially good are the meat meals and seafood, caught to order from a wall of fish tanks and prepared to your specifications. $-$$$

Golden Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant

1301 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-893-0383. Though you'll find a lot of meat on the menu at Golden Lotus, every nugget of flesh is actually a skillful gluten facsimile. This Vietnamese and Chinese restaurant serves brightly flavored, fresh, inexpensive vegetarian fare. Many order the grilled "chicken," the Vietnamese noodle dishes, and the hot pot, or come at lunch for quick to-go combo plates. Golden Lotus is run by followers of Supreme Master Ching Hai, a Buddhist spiritual master and fashion designer. $

Grand Taipei

25036 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, 510-785-7733. Cast a quick glance at the you've-seen-'em-all-before dishes on Grand Taipei's regular menu and then promptly put it aside. On the chef's specials menu, you'll find lesser-known Taiwanese specialties like shredded pork with fresh bamboo shoots and shredded eel in garlic sauce. They're all excellently executed, subtle, and flavorful. And unlike at some Chinese restaurants, here the charming servers will help curious non-Taiwanese explore their cuisine. $$

Gum Kuo

388 9th St., Oakland, 510-268-1288. Gum Kuo, which doubles as a takeout barbecue-duck joint and restaurant, gets a zero for decor, combining all the charm of a food court and a hole in the wall. But folks come here for homey Cantonese food, especially late at night. You'll find noodles on most of the tables, along with steamed rice rolls, hot pots, and the house special clay-pot rice (it's on the frontpage, in Chinese) cooked with Chinese sausage or chicken and mushrooms. And if you ask them nicely, the staff will help you pick out the good stuff. $

Imperial Tea Court

1511 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-540-8888. A one-page food menu and an 18-page tea menu reveal the main focus of this exotic hideaway, which is part restaurant, part interactive museum. High-quality tea is served gaiwan-style, in lidded cups; choose from a wide range of whites, greens, blacks, herbals, oolongs, puerhs, and more. Traditional teahouse food is served here as fresh and bright as what some barefoot hermit might whip up for a picnic on a windswept peak: fresh noodles and organic seasonal produce, prepared almost macrobiotically with practically no oil, tasting like sunshine. $

Kirin

1767 Solano Ave., Berkeley, 510-524-1677. One of the most elegantly appointed Chinese restaurants in the East Bay, copper-colored Kirin has earthenware tiles, stratosphere ceilings, and a glass-walled open kitchen. It focuses on Northern Chinese and Szechuan cuisine, so diners should try dumplings and buns, house-made noodles, and rich, spicy stir-fried entrées. $$

Legendary Palace

708 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-663-9188. Shiny and massive, Legendary Palace wants to claim the title of Chinatown's swankiest restaurant. It comes close at dinner: The chef has a delicate touch with the superb Hong Kong-style seafood, much of it swimming until it gets ordered. The rest of the menu varies in quality, but you'll generally have luck with the roast meats and hot pots. The daytime dim sum is good as long as you can beat the hustle-bustle and long waits. $-$$

The Mayflower

[illegible] Ave., Berkeley, 510-881-9788. Almost every dish in this place is packed with so much protein that you're primed to pop up from your chair and hike from here to San Leandro. It's that good, and yes, it's a hole-in-the-wall. It's about to be your favorite hole-in-the-wall, because dim sum is served here all day, every day — and because its menu sports 194 separate items denoting a whirlwind tour of regional and culinary styles, from rock-cod clay pot to spinach with duck eggs to shrimp in lobster sauce to happy family tofu to dried-fish-and-peanut jook. And that's not counting the 42 lunch specials, which include such curios as ginger lamb, seaweed salad (as an entrée!), and lemon-grass pork chop. And that's not counting a separate 57-item vegetarian menu, of which we the meat-eaters need read only as far as faux-chicken drumsticks and faux-chicken wintermelon soup before swooning dead away. And that's not counting daily specials. Or desserts. $

Renee's Place

1477 Solano Ave., Albany, 510-525-2330. Renee's Place is as Westerner-friendly as Chinese restaurants get. The room, subtle and romantically lit with silk lanterns, deserves a Prada-clad clientele (you'll feel comfortable in there, too). The service couldn't be friendlier. Meats and veggies come from eco-friendly sources. Renee's serves Chinese-American cuisine (think sweeter, glossier, familiar dishes), but it's fresh and flavorful. $$

Restaurant Peony

388 9th St., Oakland, 510-286-8866. The flavors of Hong Kong are served with panache at this Oakland Chinatown purveyor of abalone soup, Muslim lamb with scallions and cardamom, chicken with double-fried vermicelli, tableside-skinned duck, steamed seafood fresh from the fish tank, and other delicacies. Lunchtime dim sum is on the perfunctory side, but it's very popular. Large, elegant setting; service ranges from overbearing to nonexistent. $$$$

Shan Dong

328 10th St. #101, Oakland, 510-839-2299. One of the few restaurants in Chinatown to specialize in Northern Chinese cuisine, Shan Dong is also one of the neighbor-

RECENTLY REVIEWED

Plum Bar

2214 Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-7586. Plum Bar is the newer, hip appendage to its namesake restaurant next door. Interior is heavy on succulents and tea lights, neutral-toned, and wallpapered with poetry from Kerouac and Cummings. Executive chef Ron Boyd designs a dinner menu for Plum Bar patterned after the staff meals in his kitchen. The result is well-designed rib-sticking fare: a posh riposte to classic American bar food (e.g., fried pig's ears, Brussels sprouts, chicken skin, and beef tendon chicharrón). Plum Bar can suffer from living in the shadow of its glitzier neighbor, sometimes seeming like a glorified waiting room with top-shelf cocktails. $$

Make Westing

1741 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-251-1400. Make Westing fuses an Industrial Brooklyn aesthetic and a bocce court in the corner: two ingredients that help make it one of the darlings in Uptown's renaissance. Cocktails are a bit cheaper than at neighbors like Flora and Dogwood, though not quite as fancy. In a tiny micro-space behind the bar, chef Mikhaila Vanoa (formerly of Sea Salt) cranks out remarkably tasty pub fare, like sturgeon mousse in a jar with leeks and lemon peel, or a banh mi with wild mushroom pâté, sweet and sour kohlrabi, and maple sugar aioli. Try to be forgiving if the food's not 100 percent on-point. Vanoa sometimes works quadruple duty as prep cook, chef, server, and dishwasher. $$

Pomela Organic Cafe

1045 San Pablo Ave., Albany, 510-558-2100. Pomela Organic Cafe disproves commonly held beliefs about the flavorlessness of macrobiotic food. Chef Travis, a fifteen-year veteran of Shangri-La Cafe in North Oakland (formerly Manzanita and Organic Cafe) is co-owner, and he's branching out from the stripped-down cuisine of his past. Everything is organic and vegan, and besides a few potato and beet digressions, also largely macrobiotic. More importantly, the food has flavor, with seasonings like basil, ginger, and garlic making the healthful fare more user-friendly for the uninitiated. Similar to Shangri-La, the rotating daily menu is an affordable prix fixe, with a range of grains, soups, desserts, salads, and cooked veggies in each meal. $

Bette's Oceanview Diner

1807 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-644-3230. In a former industrial district that was given a new lease on life, Bette's sends typical diner cuisine into the stratosphere. A jukebox and shiny counter bespeak the 1940s, and Philadelphia scrapple and corned-beef hash are popular. But FDR never tasted anything like these soaringly fluffy soufflé pancakes, or the lightly fried oysters and fillets, served in baguettes with house-made tartar. Expert connoisseurs as most menu treats and preparations have been the same since Bette's opened in 1982. Wait times can be brutal, so bring a book and a sense of humor. $$

Rumbo al Sur

4239 Park Blvd., Oakland, 510-479-1208. Rumbo al Sur is the long-anticipated pan-Latin experiment from Chef Matt Colgan of sister dining À Côté. But after eleven years working in Mediterranean tapas, Colgan's foray into a new ethnic cuisine has mixed results. He is light on the spice, trying to appeal to a broad range of palates. Much of the resulting fare feels bland, though top-shelf dishes like the chiles rellenos and pozole verde hint at Colgan's potential. For Glenview, Rumbo al Sur is a shot of adrenaline. Locals pack the spot even on weeknights, basking in a club-like vibe. $$

Origen

2826 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, 510-848-9000. With "Farm to Fork Restaurant" chalked across the wall in large type, abundant bowls of squash spilling over throughout the space, and annotated produce diagrams lining the walls, Origen isn't shy about its intentions. You'll learn the exact pedigree of every ingredient in your meal, sometimes to the point of silliness. Luckily the ambitious, globally influenced menu is well-matched with the kitchen talents of Tracey Taylor and Daniel Clayton. Attempting a range of ethnic cuisines doesn't muddy the quality here, including a highly successful wood-fired pizza program. Origen is a little off Telegraph's well-worn strip, but worth the trip. $$

food's best. Many of the dishes on its menu are familiar, but look for the chicken and seafood dishes, noodles, and odd meats (try the shredded pig's ear). And on some days the dumpling makers in the front window seem barely able to keep up with the demand. Shan Dong is also the only place in Chinatown to offer Northern Chinese breakfast of crullers and soy milk. $-$$

Shanghai Restaurant

930 Webster St., Oakland, 510-465-6878. There's no mystery to the name: This hole-in-the-wall specializes in the cosmopolitan cuisine of that Shanghai Chinese city. Look over the case in back for a few cold plates to start your meal with, and then try such favorites as xiao long bao (Shanghai-style soup dumplings, which shoot out a burst of broth when you bite into them), unfishy shredded eel, red-cooked meats, and Shanghai-style noodles. Daytime is devoted to Shanghai-style dim sum. $-$$

Shen Hua

2914 College Ave., Berkeley, 510-883-1777. Phenomenally popular despite a steady din, the Szechuan- and Beijing-influenced dishes served in these two brightly lit, sophisticated dining rooms emphasize noodles, dumplings, and hot peppers, with adventures such as cream-cheese wontons and guai wei noodles, whose sauce incorporates tea leaves, tomato, curry and sesame oil. $-$$

Spices 3

369 12th St., Oakland, 510-625-8889. A Hong Kong action film of a restaurant, Spices 3 promises thrills on its Szechuan-tinged menu, with items like "Spicy Eel Strips with *Flare Up RED* Oil." Not to worry: the spiciness never reaches the nuclear-meltdown levels of Sichuan food, but dishes like fish fillet in explosive chile pepper, spicy string beans, and cumin lamb may rock your world. The room is as red as the food on your plate, and thronged with young diners and hip waitresses. Order the STINKY! tofu if you dare. $$

Sun Hing Meat Market

388 9th St., Oakland, 510-839-1819. This may be some of the best roast duck in Chinatown, along with a wide array of familiar and unfamiliar Chinese prepared meats, all on display. There are four tables in back — just don't look at the floor — where you can sit and eat. The owner, who's a character, will serve you bowls of rice and whatever's freshest out of the oven. $

Yuet Foo Seafood Restaurant

10560 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, 510-528-6847. Pay attention to the name, because Yuet Foo's strength is in its seafood. This Cantonese restaurant, an oasis of sophistication plopped down in the midst of San Pablo Avenue's strings of strip malls, has a huge menu, but the simpler dishes outshine the fancy. Have a crab or rock cod fished out of the aquariums and cooked to order, or order a fried or roasted chicken and lightly stir-fried greens. $-$$

Yung Kee Restaurant

888 Webster St., Oakland, 510-839-1090. Two-story restaurant with a butcher's counter selling roast pork, duck, and top-notch roast chicken. You can buy meat to go or, if you're not bothered by the low-rent decor, sit down and order simple but tasty Cantonese fare: roast meats, congee, stir-fried noodles, noodle soups, or rice plates. $

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LAST CALL

NOT QUITE A KNOCKOUT

Eight-dollar beers and existential ennui at Emeryville's Prizefighter

Ellen Cushing

The Prizefighter is a bar by and for Emeryville — that city of disposable income and comparative lack of night life, of tech startups and tech people, of shiny, well-appointed lofts and the equally shiny, well-appointed people who inhabit them. Honestly, it's a surprise it took this long. If the specialty-cocktail movement can be considered an empire, Emeryville is the latest stage in its manifest destiny. (Case in point: the Prizefighter has already been joined within city limits by a new, similarly schmancy place, Honor Bar, which is even newer and, thus, too young to review.)

Just about three months old, the Prizefighter comes to us from a star-studded slate of bartenders, mostly from trendy, concrete-floor-named establishments across the bay: co-owners Jon Santer (of Bourbon & Branch and Beretta), Dylan O'Brien (of Bloodhound) and Polly Hammack, plus Carlos Yturria (Range, Absinthe), Patrick Brennan (Range, Prospect), and Lucas Gonzales (Flora). Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was the subject of glowingly speculative blog posts before it even opened. It is situated on an unaccountably eerie stretch of Hollis near little else; even at 9 p.m. on a wet and freezing Thursday night, it was filled with attractive and upwardly mobile early adopters sipping drinks and peering out over square-rimmed glasses. Talk trended heavily toward work and streamed with buzzwords; a Pixar employee tells me this is already a new company favorite.

IT LOOKS LIKE ANY NUMBER OF NEW AND NEW-ISH WATERING HOLES IN SAN FRANCISCO, OR ... WHAT A SET DESIGNER MIGHT COME UP WITH IF PROMPTED TO CREATE AN INOFFENSIVELY, INEFFABLY HIP BAR FOR A MOVIE.

Prizefighter
6702 Hollis St., Emeryville. PrizefighterBar.com. Hours: Daily 4 p.m.-2 a.m.

We sat on a plush black leather banquette near the door, shouted over the music (old soul and *London Calling* era Clash, very, very loud) and examined the menu. Everything on the Prizefighter's cocktail menu costs $9, contains an average of three ingredients, and hews toward barely-fussed-with classics despite all evidence to the contrary; this is not the kind of place where you'll find tea foams or saffron syrup. I had a Bee's Knees (Hendrick's, lemon, honey — all acid and no alcohol, and weirdly tiny) and a ginger ale (house-made, pretty good); two friends had other largely forgettable, imperceptibly alcoholic cocktails, one of which went unfinished. A third friend, meanwhile, had a beer; it was $8 and tasted like beer. There are also wines for $7 to $9 a glass, and big, alcoholic punch bowls on the menu, which, it should be noted, seem like a marginally better deal at $50 for six to eight servings. But still, the fact remains — *an eight-dollar beer!? Highway robbery.*

Prizefighter's Moscow mule. Bina Beaderian

Design-wise, the Prizefighter falls squarely along the lines of the now-ubiquitous basement-chic aesthetic — exposed brick, unfinished surfaces, potted plants, inescapable dimness, plumbing as decoration rather than necessity, shuffleboard. In other words, expensive and new, conspicuously disguised as dingy and old, or a *Dwell* magazine spread come to life. Indeed, if we're playing upscale-bar bingo — which, of course, we are, always — the Prizefighter takes 'em: the prize-industrial accents, an obscure/ironic/old-timey theme, a painstakingly typeset menu, drinks scraping the $10 range: ding, ding, ding, ding. Altogether, it looks like any number of new and new-ish watering holes in San Francisco, or uncannily like Uptown's Make Westing, or, more to the point, what a set designer might come up with if prompted to create an inoffensively, ineffably hip bar for a movie. There's a weird, focus-grouped kind of sterility to the place, one which may or may not be overcome as the Prizefighter finds its footing a bit — it is, after all, still very new — and one which echoes its surroundings. But before it was lofts and tech companies, Emeryville was an industrial city known far and wide for its brothels, racetracks, and general lawlessness, and before the Prizefighter was the Prizefighter, it was, for a long time, Kitty's, which shut down last year after a massive brawl broke out there. I was never fortunate enough to make it out to Kitty's, but by all accounts, it was a great place. ●

Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com

FOOD & WINE

CULINARY & WINE

Afrolicious Puerto Rican and soul food and music. Check website for table service, booths, events, and VIP options, through Jan. 29. 5-10 p.m. no cover. Oakland, Lungo 463 9th St., Oakland, 510-835-4342. LungoOakland.com.

Market Crab Feed for Forest Home Benefit Park With complimentary host d'oeuvres and wine and beer for sale. Cracked crab, pasta, salad, and french bread served at 1 p.m. Call 925-820-0980 for tickets or information. Sat., Jan. 28, 6 p.m., $42. Dougherty Station Community Center, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon.

Food N' Justice Workshop Phat Beets Produce hosts a workshop series at the anatomy, experiential tent, with weekly lessons in varying topics like homemade food preservation. Saturdays, 11 a.m.-noon, free. PhatBeetsProduce.org. North Oakland Farmers' Market, Arlington Market Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Indian Curry Oakland, Demo Learn how to make Tikka Masala, Tikka Masala and fish curry. At 375 15th St., Oakland. Sun., 1 p.m., $100, 510-239-3430. LeamCurry.com.

Monday Night Flight Fight Featuring five 5-ounce pours of "Garnet Plat Bone" with a free draft beer for matching the correct flight, hosted by Brain and Beauty. Mondays, 5 p.m. Beer Revolution, 464 3rd St., Oakland, 510-452-2337. Beer-Revolution.com.

Oakland, Indian The owner and manager of other an organic and locally sourced Middle Eastern restaurant in San Francisco, presents his new cookbook, *New Moroccan*. Thu., Jan. 26, 7 p.m. free. Oakland, 1798 Fourth St., Berkeley, 510-655-7771, fourstoneberkeley.

Oakland Restaurant Week With special prix fixe menus offered at more than two dozen participating restaurants, including Camino, Grand Tavern, Seison, and Oliveto. RSVP recommended. Visit website for menus and booking. Through Jan. 29. $10-$40. VisitOakland.org/RestaurantWeek.

Sam Mogannam: "Eat Here: Food: A Market's Guide to Shopping, Oakland, and Growing Community Through Food" The owner of San Francisco's Bi-Rite Market discusses and signs copies of his book, a shopping guide, reference, and cookbook that explores the true value of food. Sat., Jan. 28, 2-4 p.m. free. Market Grocery, 5850 Park St.

Slow Food East Bay's Market Oakland, and Potluck Bring a seasonal or local dish to share. Soup provided by Three Stone Hearth, and find out what plans the East Bay chapter of Slow Food has in store this year. RSVP ASAP. Thu., Jan. 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m., $5 suggested. Oakland, 510-233-9818. SlowFoodEastBay.com. Three Stone Hearth, 1581 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-981-1334. ThreeStoneHearth.com.

Three-Course Italian Cookout, Class Learn how to make sarmoncin, black mapper dal, Market brisket, and apple bread. At $42

Westernfolk Tour, members Sat., Jan. 28, 5-6 p.m., $80. 510-239-3430, LeamCurry.com.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus locally prepared foods. Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. PCFMA.com. Alameda Farmers' Market, Haight Ave. at Webster St., Alameda.

Bayfair Center Farmers' Market Fresh produce samples by local organic and specialty farmers. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro, 510-357-6000, ShopBayfair.com.

UFA Farm Fresh Choice Community Farmers' Market Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free. 510-548-1704, EcologyCenter.org. Berkeley Youth Alternatives, 1255 Allston Way, Oakland, 510-845-9010, BYAonline.org.

Berkeley Farm Fresh Student Community Farmers' Market Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. Wednesdays, 3-6:30 p.m., free. 510-548-1104, EcologyCenter.org. Frances Albrier Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley, 510-981-6150, CityofBerkeley.CA.US.

Fruitvale Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, bread samples, and more. Accepts WIC and EBT. Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free, 510-535-6929. Fruitvale Village, 34th E. 12th St. (at Fruitvale BART), Oakland, 510-535-6900, UnityCouncil.org.

Grand Lake Farmers' Market The weekly market hosts more than 80 produce growers, foods, and arts and crafts vendors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free, 800-897-3276. SolanoFlea.org. Lakeshore Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave., Oakland, 510-238-7275.

Hayward City Hall Farmers' Market A farmers' market featuring locally grown and produced foods from more than 35 farmers and specialty food purveyors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 510-888-2276. Hayward City Hall Plaza, 777 B St., Hayward, 510-583-4000, Cl.Hayward.Ca.Us.

Kaiser Permanente Hayward Farmers' Market With vendors selling locally grown California produce at the main entrance to the hospital. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. free, PCFMA.com. Kaiser Hayward, 27400 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward.

Kaiser Permanente Oakland Farmers' Market With vendors selling fresh all-organic fruits and vegetables. Fridays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. PCFMA.com. Kaiser Oakland, 3801 Howe St., Oakland.

Kensington Farmers' Market With a nursery, fresh flowers, all-organic chocolate, and products, fresh wild fish, fruits and vegetables, nuts, honey, bread, fresh pizza, and seasonal sessions. The market also hosts live music and workshops. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-847-0007, KensingtonFarmersMarket.org. Oakland Circle, at the Colusa Circle, Kensington.

Laurel District Farmers' Market With certified organic farmers, fruits and vegetables, food and prepared food booths near the Purple Lawn Cafe. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 510-482-1000. FoodCommunityCulture.org. Laurel District Farmers' Market, 4573 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

Montclair Village Farmers' Market Featuring organic produce and prepared foods. Free parking in village garage at the top of La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. MontclairVillage.com/farmers_market. Montclair Village, LaSalle and Moraga Aves., Oakland.

North Berkeley Farmers' Market With honey, specialty foods, all-organic produce, and more for sale, along with special programs and events. WIC and EBT accepted. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m., free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

North Oakland Arlington Market Center Farmers' Market With produce and other products sold by more than ten vendors, including Farm Fresh, Alchemy Center Collective, and more. Also features produce swaps. Accepts WIC and EBT. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. PhatBeetsProduce.org. North Oakland Farmers' Market, Arlington Market Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Oakland Children's Hospital Farmers' Market EBT and WIC okay. Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m. free. 510-250-7857. PhatBeetsProduce.org. Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland, 747 52nd St., Oakland.

Old Oakland Farmers' Market Farmers' market with produce, breads, oils and other organic items along with plenty of samples. Fridays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. free. Old Oakland Farmers' Market, 9th St., Oakland. Broadway and Clay St., Oakland. UrbanVillageOnline.com/markets/old-oakland.

Pacific Coast Jack London Square Farmers' Market With seasonal produce, greens, nuts, freshly baked bread, pastries, cut flowers, specialty foods, yoga, live music, and arts and crafts for kids. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free. PCFMA.com. Jack London Square, 55 Broadway, Oakland.

Richmond Farmers' Market With fresh, locally grown fruit, live chickens, flowers, eggs, and other produce. WIC and SNAP accepted. Fridays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and RichmondFarmersMarket.org. Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. and Barrett Ave., Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market With fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, 510-981-5050, Ci.Berkeley.Ca.Us/ContentDisplay.aspx?id=12700.

Temescal Farmers' Market California-certified farmers offer seasonal fruits, dried fruits and nuts, fresh ranch eggs, baked goods, locally caught fish, fresh-cut flowers, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 510-745-7100. DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-6 p.m., free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. Derby St. (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley.

Youth-Led Farm Stand Featuring seasonal produce from organic farmers and local urban gardens, along with bulk dry goods. At 10738 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. Mondays, 3-6 p.m., free. FoodCommunityCulture.com.

PICK

Lunar New Year Celebration

Mochi, short-grain rice pounded with huge mallets and rolled in a delectably soft, subtly flavored, chewy morsel, is a New Year's standby in Japan, where its whiteness mirrors the clouds and snow. *Mochi*-pounding and other Asian cooking demonstrations are part of a Lunar New Year celebration at the Oakland Museum of California (1000 Oak St., Oakland) on Sunday, Jan. 29. Other activities include storytelling, dance, acrobatics, and rapping. Noon-4 p.m. free with museum admission ($12 general, $9 seniors and students, $6 youth, free for children eight and under). 510-318-8400 or MuseumCA.org. — *Anneli Rufus*

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MOVIES

THE QUARE FELLOW

Glenn Close is *Albert Nobbs*
The Grey is wolf jerky

By Kelly Vance

Aaron Johnson and Glenn Close star in *Albert Nobbs.*

A*lbert Nobbs*, the movie, stands to be picked on almost as much as Albert Nobbs, the character. That's not necessarily because its potential audience is inclined to automatically shun or ridicule the story of a woman passing for a man in Victorian-era Dublin, Ireland. Anyone who hates "different" folks that much doubtless wouldn't even consider seeing this costumed drama in the first place.

No, the thing that raises warning flags about Glenn Close's portrayal of meek, cross-dressing hotel servant Mr. Nobbs is the suspicion that it's the latest in a long line of homosexual outrage melodramas about intolerance through the ages — the type of flabby by-the-numbers advocacy film that has clogged gay-lesbian film festivals for years. There's the added notion that Close's performance is doing double duty as a prime piece of awards fodder.

Not to worry on either account. The maudlin meter rarely gets out of the "half-a-hanky" range. Veteran actress Close and director Rodrigo Garcia put in careful and diligent work alongside a strong supporting cast, and *Albert Nobbs* emerges as a yarn with broad human interest and honest characterization — with the transgender hot button issue sitting contentedly in second place.

In Morrison's Hotel in Dublin live a number of odd sods and cuddly eccentrics. Dr. Holloran (Brendan Gleeson) is an aging rake down from Belfast who greatly enjoys his dram. Upper-class swell Viscount Yarrell (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) is constantly flitting in and out with a coterie of swingers. Amongst the downstairs staff are gossipy housemaid Helen (the ubiquitous Mia Wasikowska), newly arrived laborer/handyman Joe Mackin (Aaron Jackson), kindly Mrs. Baker (Pauline Collins), and a little hiccup of a man called Albert Nobbs, the sort of person you might overlook the first time you met him. Albert is a "quare fellow" indeed, attentive to a fault, obsequious by nature, keeping to himself, and yet aching with loneliness and yearning to connect. Then suddenly a rambling, swaggering, house-painter named Hubert Page (lanky Janet McTeer) spills into view and upsets Albert's tidy world. Hubert and Albert share the same secret, and it opens up wide vistas of regret as well as possibility for the senior citizen role-player.

Albert Nobbs
Directed by Rodrigo Garcia. With Glenn Close and Janet McTeer. Opens Friday.

The Grey
Directed by Joe Carnahan. With Liam Neeson and Dermot Mulroney. Opens Friday.

This is Close's second stab at the role. In 1982 she impersonated this same character in *The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs*, a New York Off-Broadway stage adaptation by playwright/director Simone Benmussa of Irish author George Moore's original story (for which Close won an Obie award), and the character apparently stayed with her. Years later, after *Fatal Attraction*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Reversal of Fortune*, the *101 Dalmatians* movies, and a string of recent TV appearances, Close revisits her old friend with one of the most ingratiating star turns of the year, the complete antithesis of a blowsy late-career actorly indulgence.

Albert literally creeps up on us, mincing his way into our sympathy. Close's performance deserves every bit of the attention it's getting, but let's not forget she also had a hand in the screenplay, with writers John Banville and Gabriella Prekop. Albert touches something universal in his/her unobtrusive hope for happiness. We find ourselves pulling for him, especially when Helen and Joe begin to do what the Helens and Joes always seem to do to people like Albert.

Colombian-born director Garcia made a number of undistinguished movies and TV dramas before *Albert Nobbs*. It has to be said that the Irish milieu suits him, especially Albert's understated rapprochement with Hubert, the working-man-with-a-difference ensconced in a cottage with his wife Cathleen (Bronagh Gallagher). Ordinary domestic bliss is envisioned as something so simple yet unattainable it threatens to drive Albert mad — it's a story for our times. Somewhere along the line our disbelief drops by the wayside, we begin to connive along with Albert, and the slender premise takes hold irretrievably. Albert is obliged to masquerade as a man in order to make his/her way in life unmolested, almost as protective coloring. His/her predicament provides our entertainment; to put it in proper perspective, and Close's craft raises the saddest of stories to the level of art.

If you wanted to make a thrilling outdoor action movie about a group of jet-crash survivors marching across the frozen Alaskan wastes in the dead of winter while fending off ferocious wild animals, it would be better if your wolves didn't look silly.

The wolves in *The Grey* look silly. They're more than twice the size of actual wolves, steroid-pumped and massive, as tall on all fours as Liam Neeson is on two, outfitted with enhanced electronic howls and growls, able to leap twenty yards in one bound, and worst of all their eyes glow bright red even in total darkness with no light source. Somebody must have been studying the *Twilight* movies ver-r-ry closely.

Perhaps we're putting too much emphasis on the state of the critters in *The Grey*, animatronic and CGI as they might be. After all, there are real live human beings in the story, too. The aforementioned Neeson stars as Ottway, a petro-company employee whose job it is to shoot wolves before they attack the company's pipeline workers at work in the far northern oil fields. Conditions are brutal, the men are uncouth and ruthless, and so when a plane carrying Ottway and a group of roughnecks crashes in the middle of nowhere en route to civilization for R&R, the six men who stagger away from the wreckage already hate each other. And then come the canny canines.

It would be nice to surmise that action hombre Joe Carnahan — who directed Neeson in *The A-Team* and did stuff like *Smokin' Aces* and *Narc* — might have aspired to make *The Grey* a tight, realistic adventure. He certainly has all the ingredients, including actors Dermot Mulroney and Frank Grillo and the harshly beautiful British Columbia location scenery around Whistler. But that silliness creeps in, and it doesn't matter very much onscreen that Neeson is claiming he chewed wolf jerky to prepare for his role. He could have eaten pinecones and road-kill raccoons and it wouldn't have mattered. Save your money and rent one of these instead: *The Way Back*, *Never Cry Wolf*, *White Fang* (1991 version), *Into the Wild*, or Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*. And try to avoid oil fields. ●

Kelly.Vance@EastBayExpress.com

MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, go to EastBayExpress.com or scan the QR code. Capsule reviews are written by Bethany Jean Clement (B.J.C.), Jen Graves (J.G.), Andrew Grossell (A.G.), J.R. Jones (J.J.), Ben Sachs (B.S.), Amy Scott (A.S.), David Schrader (D.S.), Kelly Vance (K.V.), and Sam Worley (S.W.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com.

OPENING

Albert Nobbs See this week's review. (113 min.)

The Grey See this week's review. (117 min.)

Man on a Ledge Crime thriller about an ex-con balancing perilously on the edge of a [illegible] and the police officer tasked with talking him off his small ledge (Elizabeth Banks), as well as the diamond heist happening on the world's [illegible] directed by Asger Leth, [illegible] also starring Sam Worthington, Ed Harris, and Jamie Bell. (102 min.)

One for the Money Katherine Heigl vehicle starring the actress as bounty hunter who's tapped with hunting down her old high school [illegible].

A Separation [illegible] when a female household caregiver named Razieh (Sareh Bayat) [illegible] the home of a [illegible] family with enough [illegible] already to help another husband and his father [illegible] (Peyman Moadi) take care of the grandfather, an Alzheimer's patient. [illegible] (123 min.) (K.V.)

We Need to Talk About Kevin Tilda Swinton at her most irritating, which is to say at her most effective. [illegible] as wife and mother Eva Khatchadourian [illegible] (112 min.) (K.V.)

ONGOING

Addiction Incorporated Charles Evans Jr.'s well-constructed documentary [illegible] of the public health campaign against the tobacco industry from the point of view of whistleblower Victor DeNoble, a research scientist for Philip Morris [illegible] anti-smoking doc to see if you're only having one. (102 min.) (K.V.)

The Adventures of Tintin 3D Steven Spielberg and Hergé's crime-fighting juvenile comic-book character Tintin were made for each other. [illegible] the sequence [illegible] Andy Serkis' [illegible] Captain Haddock [illegible] to the Arab town to the wonderful "dueling cranes" sequence [illegible] animated tribute to the youthful Belgian [illegible] not only captures the essence of Tintin's appeal but also the [illegible] of what we know as old Spielberg artistic mandate. (107 min.) (K.V.)

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked In the third feature-film installment of the wildly [illegible]

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Movie showtimes and below ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com or by scanning the code below

know as the Spielberg artist's mandate. (107 min.) (B.V.)

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked In the third feature-film installment of the wildly popular kids movie franchise, America's favorite squeaky-voiced rodents find themselves stranded on a tropical island. (87 min.)

The Artist Convincing the skier. The French team of actor Jean Dujardin and writer-director Michel Hazanavicius (the OSS 117 spy spoof series) takes a time-machine ride back to 1920s Hollywood for the story of a vain silent-movie star (Dujardin) whose career fades after the coming of talkies. Meanwhile, his girlfriend (pretty Bérénice Bejo) is well on the way to being a star herself. The gimmick is that the movie — all of it, including supporting players John Goodman and James Cromwell — is set without sound until the movie's final scene. (100 min.) (X.V.)

Beauty and the Beast 3D In the Mouse House tradition of *The Little Mermaid* comes a shimmering animated retelling — now remastered in 3D — of the French fairytale built around a large-eyed young woman, a brooding, towering Beast, and an enchanting castle full of gesticulating furniture. (84 min.) (X.V.)

Carnage Eighty minutes of entertaining squabbling. Working on a suburban Paris soundstage to stand in for a Brooklyn, New York apartment, exile auteur Roman Polanski parks himself and actors Christoph Waltz, Kate Winslet, Jodie Foster, and John C. Reilly — as nervous, self-centered parents trying their best to be civilized in settling a fight between their unseen adolescent sons. Naturally the grown-ups are more childish than the kids could ever be, with Waltz and Foster leading the charge. (80 min.) (R.V.) (B.V.)

Contraband New Orleans smuggler Chris Farraday (Mark Wahlberg) is a retired smuggler now trying to live the straight life. But because of a mentee's screwup, he's forced to make the proverbial "one last run" to Panama for cocaine and counterfeit currency — or else heavy Giovanni Ribisi will kill Chris' wife (Kate Beckinsale). What keeps this from being the nifty little actioner it might have been? The writing mostly, especially the dialogue and some illogical situations. (110 min.) (B.V.) (B.V.)

Coriolanus Ralph Fiennes winningly pivots his career to an auteur-director with this thrilling update of the Shakespeare tragedy, now imagined as a contemporary drama of civil unrest, turbulent like survivors and Butterfield in a bloody horror cinema with newsreel-style combat video footage and a full horror of vicious, deadly performances. (122 min.) (X.V.)

A Dangerous Method We expected something of a drawing-room talkfest when director David Cronenberg — with help from screenwriter Christopher Hampton, adapting his own play as well as John Kerr's book — undertook a retelling of the rivalry between the fathers of psychoanalysis, Carl Gustav Jung (played by Michael Fassbender) and Sigmund Freud (Viggo Mortensen) circa 1904-1913. We also expected Cronenberg's fascination with cerebral mannerisms and grotesque sexuality to figure in, as it does when Jung falls to adulterous love with his wonder, a hysterical expression named Sabina Spielrein (Keira Knightley, with arms in hysterics and jaw in her thing). What we didn't expect was that it would turn out as a snooze ride. (99 min.) (X.V.)

The Descendants It's a split triumph for writer-director Alexander Payne and actor George Clooney, who plays a well-off Honolulu businessman with big decisions to make after an accident leaves his wife in a coma. The emotional and familial progress of "back-up parent" Matt King (Clooney) and his daughters is of a piece with the mix-dos funny, ultimately touching pain and art of similarly flummoxed characters in *Sideways*, *About Schmidt*, and the rest of the Payne filmography. Like *Election*, Payne is so enthralled with individual Americans as in with the idea of being an American — here expanded to take in Matt's native Hawaiian family background. Clooney turns in one of his finest performances, may be the best so far, with terrific support by Shailene Woodley and Amara Miller as the daughters. (115 min.) (X.V.)

The Devil Inside Documentary-style horror film about a young woman on a quest to find the true story behind her mother's murderous spree during an exorcism.

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close On the gravely led by director Stephen Daldry via Mr. Bestseller (*The Reader*, *Billy Elliot*) an emotionally unwell 9-year-old New Yorker named Oskar Schell (Thomas Horn) undertakes a quest to find out the real meaning of his father's (Tom Hanks) horror in the World Trade Center on 9/11. Mawkish and heavy-handed when it isn't bizarre, content to be heartbreaking and uplifting. (129 min.) (K.V.)

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo Nothing terribly wrong with David Fincher's English-language version of the first episode of the Stieg Larsson-penned Swedish trilogy: hacker female avenger Lisbeth Salander and her war on men who hate women. Director Fincher clearly has princely budget wealth, with welcome overtones of *Zodiac* and both Rooney Mara (as tech-savvy hellion) and Daniel Craig (in the role of reporter Mikael Blomkvist) provide themselves well. But we wonder, as we've done in similar cases, exactly why the remake was necessary, other than to capture the subtitle-resistant audience segment in the US. (158 min.) (B.V.)

Haywire Soderbergh's pic stars Women's fighter Gina Carano as an international rent-a-killer trying to find the shady government (or private) spy org sold her out in Barcelona. The deft hand of director Steven Soderbergh is everywhere apparent, from the sleek exposition to the smooth, retro Seventies-style visuals. (93 min.) (B.V.)

Hugo A Martin Scorsese children's movie, with all that implies: the horror, comfort doesn't have much of a feel for the lead character, an orphaned teenage boy who lives in the bowels of a 1930s-era Paris train station, evading the station's guards. Scorsese's main concern is young Hugo's (Asa Butterfield) run-in with Georges (Ben Kingsley), a grumpy shopkeeper who just might be the great early-film legend Georges Méliès, living like his life is over. So Hugo isn't very much for kids. It's intended for cinema-minded like Scorsese, and a treat for the rest of us, with glorious clips from Méliès' short masterpieces, plus his own gorgeously rendered 3D version of film-lover's Paris. (127 min.) (B.V.)

The Ides of March A high-class election potboiler with a superb cast is still a potboiler when it's co-written and directed by George Clooney. Better to look at this as a handy entertaining personality parade, with actor Ryan Gosling in

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the lead role as the [illegible] secretary of a liberal [illegible] presidential candidate (Clooney) trying to cope with adversity leading up to the [illegible] primary. Gosling's cold eyes have never been [illegible] than as the [illegible] Myers, the true political [illegible] with changes and a shock before one eye and the eyes of fellow political [illegible] Philip Seymour Hoffman, Paul Giamatti, Evan Rachel Wood, Marisa Tomei, and Jeffrey Wright — all strongly in character. (101 min.) (K.V.)

The Iron Lady [illegible] what we were willing to see [illegible] A [illegible] under-the-skin portrait of Britain's former UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. It's the kind of job that calls for Meryl Streep in full deep-character [illegible], and the actress doesn't disappoint even if the project does. Thatcher is [illegible] in the early stages of senile dementia, hallucinating her deceased husband (Jim Broadbent), with her achievements in flashback, rising from shopkeeper's daughter to Tory political [illegible] powerful [illegible] disparaging people as fat slobs, etc. At least they left off her infamous [illegible] with Ronnie Reagan and Henry Kissinger. (105 min.) (K.V.)

J. Edgar Clint Eastwood's biographical study of FBI honcho J. Edgar Hoover (bravely portrayed warts and all by Leonardo DiCaprio) is a [illegible] [illegible] production, the sort of movie that [illegible] you feel queasy as you leave the theater. As written for the screen by Dustin Lance Black (Oscar winner for his *Milk* screenplay), Hoover was simultaneously one of the most powerful men in the US [illegible] — and also a prissy mama's boy [illegible] bully whose vicious [illegible] for Reds, anti-war protesters, and African-American civil rights [illegible] like Martin Luther King Jr. may or may not have been a cover for his homosexual relationship with his chief lieutenant, FBI agent Clyde Tolson (Armie Hammer). But [illegible] the smoldering [illegible] in Hoover's theater (Judi Dench), we learn [illegible] how his prejudices were [illegible], only the tawdry consequences. (137 min.) (K.V.)

Joyful Noise Everyone onscreen (including Dolly Parton, Queen Latifah, and the movie-known supporting players) seems to be having a good time in this cheesy Musical comedy, even though the material is strictly by-the-numbers. A small-town gospel choir prepares for a national competition, and some of the singers have [illegible] conflicts that get neatly [illegible] by the end. (118 min.) (K.V.)

Margin Call Not the [illegible] 2008 Economic Meltdown drama [illegible] far from the end, writer-director J.C. Chandor's debut feature benefits hugely from his sophisticated [illegible] and dialogue, as a [illegible], [illegible] Wall Street investment firm is the first to go down in flames. Basically, they [illegible] the guy with [illegible] everything (Stanley Tucci) and now they're [illegible] other and no one [illegible] the $350K/year junior-exec grunts really understands the business. (105 min.) (K.V.)

Martha Marcy May Marlene A tense young woman (artfully portrayed by Elizabeth Olsen) escapes from a [illegible] Manson-Family-style cult in contemporary rural New York state and returns to the home of her [illegible] sister [illegible] a tough time letting go. And the cult [illegible] goes. The provocative [illegible] calm story [illegible] on the [illegible] under Martha's skin and staying there for the [illegible] running time. [illegible] Director Sean Durkin [illegible] that, with strong [illegible] from the reliable John Hawkes as Patrick, the cult's leader; Sarah Paulson and Hugh Dancy as Martha's [illegible] and brother-in-law; and Julia Garner as a devotee. (120 min.) (K.V.)

Melancholia Lars von Trier's filmography has been a bumpy ride [illegible] pretentious situations [illegible] to human possibilities yet hampered by a [illegible] reality. But this [illegible] doom drama zeros [illegible] end of the world and its emotional impact on a troubled family may well be his masterpiece. Conceived in the midst of the writer-director's bout with depression, it shows what happened to a [illegible] young woman, Justine (Kirsten [illegible] in a career-defining performance), the [illegible] husband (Alexander Skarsgård), her sister (Charlotte Gainsbourg) and the [illegible] (Kiefer Sutherland) [illegible] with [illegible] an approaching planet, Melancholia, [illegible] Earth. It's not so much an allegory as a hallucination in the key of "von Trier noir," with some of the most gorgeous visuals of his career wedded to passages of Wagnerian musical doom. Nothing von Trier has done before approaches the gravity of this. (135 min.) (K.V.)

Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol For the fourth [illegible] mega-franchise [illegible], Tom Cruise reprises his role as [illegible] spy Ethan Hunt [illegible] his organization's reputation after it's framed for an act of terrorism. (133 min.) (K.V.)

Moneyball Not your typical baseball movie. Bennett Miller's thoughtful screen version of Michael Lewis' enormously influential profile of Billy Beane and the 2002 Oakland A's rightly pays much more attention to Beane's revolutionary strategy/business [illegible] than to on-field Moneyball. In that respect it's more like *The Social Network* than *Field of Dreams*, which is a good thing. (133 min.) (K.V.)

The Muppets Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie, Gonzo, the Swedish Chef, Animal, and the rest of the original [illegible] return from a long hiatus to [illegible] rescue the Muppets theater from the clutches of a greedy oil tycoon (Chris Cooper). Little kids and anyone who remembers the Muppets will be suitably wowed. (103 min.) (K.V.)

New Year's Eve Director Garry Marshall and screenwriter Katherine Fugate return to the formula of their [illegible] hit *Valentine's Day*, loading another [illegible] situations of stars through a [illegible] take place on the title day. [illegible] Marshall's *Pretty Woman*. [illegible] but even with the [illegible] this seems a puzzlingly bad [illegible] assortment of weak punch lines, sentimental music cues, and trite situations (Robert De Niro as a terminally ill man yearning for his estranged daughter; Ashton Kutcher and Lea Michele as antagonists stuck in an elevator, etc.). (K.V.)

Pariah The life and times of a bright but [illegible] teenage African-American middle-class [illegible] lesbian from Brooklyn, New York, and her efforts to come out into a rough, tough world. Kudos to actor Adepero Oduye and writer-director Dee Rees for making the young protagonist Alike's rite of passage so challenging and then so rewarding, with terrific, naturalistic performances by [illegible], [illegible], Charles Parnell, and Kim Wayans (as Alike's [illegible], church-going mother). But it's [illegible] who [illegible] the film across the finish line. (86 min.) (K.V.)

Shame Every actor Michael Fassbender (*A Dangerous Method*, *X-Men: First Class*) gets put through an [illegible] by director Steve McQueen. The gist of it is that Fassbender's nervous Manhattan [illegible] from his obsessive carnal conquests — not even the [illegible] with his needy [illegible] Carey Mulligan. But you might have guessed that. He's [illegible] Empty, Meaningless [illegible] and hates every [illegible] of it, just like the protagonists of every other lazy social problem movie. For what it's worth, there's nothing wrong with Fassbender's performance; the [illegible] everything [illegible] co-writer [illegible] Abi Morgan and McQueen's [illegible] (99 min.) (K.V.)

Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows Holmes (Robert Downey Jr.) [illegible] and his [illegible] companion Dr. Watson (Jude Law) [illegible] along for the ride [illegible] journey [illegible] to France, Germany, and Switzerland on the trail of evil genius Professor Moriarty (Jared Harris) and his henchmen, who are trying to [illegible] World War [illegible] twenty years too early. The change of scenery does them good. Otherwise same Victorian clutter, same overstuffed [illegible] same Guy Ritchie [illegible] hyperactivity, but with the [illegible] addition of Noomi Rapace (of the Swedish Dragon Tattoo movies) as a [illegible] fortune-teller/spy, plus the agreeable [illegible] of Stephen Fry as Mycroft Holmes, the [illegible] brother. (129 min.) (K.V.)

The Sitter [illegible] comedy [illegible] Jonah Hill as a [illegible] college student who becomes a babysitter [illegible] with mixed results.

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy All the ingredients come together in a [illegible] of the John le Carré Cold War spy novel about the hunt for a Soviet mole inside the British secret service, circa 1973. At the top of the list is actor Gary Oldman's [illegible] quiet, careful, [illegible] agent George Smiley [illegible] Swedish [illegible] Tomas Alfredson. It's backed up by a dream cast of English players: Colin Firth, John Hurt, Benedict Cumberbatch, Tom Hardy, Toby Jones, [illegible] Simon McBurney, Ciarán Hinds, and dependable [illegible] Mark Strong in a change of pace as a [illegible]. The screenplay [illegible] by Peter Straughan and the late Bridget O'Connor is likewise a model of efficiency. (127 min.) (K.V.)

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 Third [illegible] of the wildly popular Young Adult vampire series. (117 min.)

War Horse A boy, a horse, and Steven Spielberg. That's a dangerous combination. [illegible] Spielberg displays his best and worst tendencies in this gorgeous [illegible] story [illegible]. An English [illegible] Albert Narracott (Jeremy Irvine) raises [illegible] horse Joey [illegible] to see the horse sold to an army officer and shipped to France to help fight the Germans. So begins a movie that [illegible] the theater [illegible] with some [illegible] (the cavalry charge, the No Man's Land scene, etc.) [illegible] with some of the [illegible] shown on a big screen since [illegible]. The screenplay by Lee Hall and Richard Curtis [illegible] Michael Morpurgo's novel [illegible]. The acting, especially by [illegible] Emily Watson, Liam Cunningham, and

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Benedict Cumberbatch in smaller roles. In fine [illegible] but watch out for Peter Mullan and Emily Watson as Albert's parents. The thing that drives War Horse is Spielberg's unbridled propensity for [illegible] and overstatement, plus his excessively visual sensibility, in which nothing escapes un-illustrated. It's a child's point of view, and this is a child's movie in every sense of the word. (147 min.) (K.V.)

We Bought a Zoo A wretchedly cloying script by Aline Brosh McKenna (*Morning Glory*, *27 Dresses*) gets an impressive makeover from director Cameron Crowe (*Almost Famous*, *Jerry Maguire*). On paper, the plot is enough to make you puke: a wealthy writer (Matt Damon), grieving for the death of his wife, [illegible] his beloved little daughter and sulking teenage son into a rundown, small-town zoological park, where their broken family is healed and dad finds new love with the [illegible] zookeeper (Scarlett Johansson). The movie is quite enjoyable, though, [illegible] by Crowe's trademark [illegible] and deft handling of [illegible] character actors (J.B. Smoove, Carla Gallo, Patrick Fugit, Angus Macfadyen). Damon is typically fine, and Johansson surprisingly so; [illegible] McKenna adapted a memoir by British writer Benjamin Mee, with Thomas Haden Church, Elle Fanning, and John Michael Higgins. (124 min.) (J.J.)

Young Adult It's hard to separate Young Adult from the [illegible] — both what we're expecting in the movie and what they seem to [illegible] of the audience. Written by Diablo Cody and directed by Jason Reitman, a writer and director who collectively have some smart, fun work on their résumés, Young Adult stars Charlize Theron as an it's-okay-you're-supposed-to-hate-her alcoholic [illegible] named Mavis. Patrick Wilson as Mavis's small-town high-school boyfriend with whom she sets out to seduce, and Patton Oswalt as the former [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and while it does have a few inspired moments, they're just that — two-to-four-minute periods of insight and humor, showing the potential of what all [illegible] people could've made if they hadn't taken a few [illegible] wrong turns. The whole movie's too off-key, too [illegible] and unpredictable, that it's difficult to just sit and experience the thing without interrupting it to wonder, "Ohhh, maybe they sort of thought this?" and "Do you think they wanted me to feel that?" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with the world in some subtitled way, but that never happens, and the [illegible] who are confronted with Mavis' selfishness don't give us anything to latch on to or sympathize with, either. Obviously, movies can be worth watching without people we love, lessons we learn, etc. But here there's just a void where the substance should be. They [illegible] of dollars and just forgot to say — well, pretty much anything. (94 min.) (A.M.)

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FRI-SAT-SUN 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30, 10:00
MON-THUR. 5:00 7:30, 10:00

TINTIN 3D (PG)
FRI SAT SUN 11:45, 2:15
MON-THUR. 4:30

HUGO 3D (PG)
FRI SAT SUN 4:30 7:25, 9:55
MON-THUR. 7:25, 9:55

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ONE NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Meditation for Melancholy (50 min., 2007). With director Billy [illegible] in person. Preceded by *My Josephine* (8 min., 2003). African Film Festival 2012. Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 7:00.

Leon: The Professional (133 min., 1994). Pinkbasha (UA Berkeley 7, Berkeley, 9:00).

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

Fold in Love (74 min., 1927). Silent with live music by Judith Rosenberg on piano. Buster Keaton: The Measure of a Man (PFA, 7:00).

Diabolique (107 min., 1955). In French with English subtitles. Henri-Georges Clouzot: The Cinema of Disenchantment (PFA, 8:40).

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

Pickpocket (75 min., 1959). In French with English subtitles. Austere Sublime: The Films of Robert Bresson (PFA, 6:30).

Diary of a Country Priest (114 min., 1950). In French with English subtitles. Austere Perfectionism: The Films of Robert Bresson (PFA, 8:30).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29

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[illegible]
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10 Academy Award Nominations Including Best Picture, Best Director & Best Actor!
THE ARTIST
(4:15) 7:15 9:30 PG-13
[illegible]

5 Academy Award Nominations [illegible]
Best Picture, Best Director & Best [illegible]
THE DESCENDANTS
(3:45) 6:30 9:15 R
[illegible]

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Schedule for Fri. January 27th – Thu. February 2nd

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Best Actress & Best Cinematography
THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO
(3:15) 8:30 R

4 Academy Award Nominations Including Best Picture & Best Director – Woody Allen!
MIDNIGHT IN PARIS
(4:45) 9:00 PG-13

3 Academy Award Nominations [illegible]
Best Picture & Best Director – Terrence Malick
TREE OF LIFE
(3:00) 6:45 PG-13

Academy Award Nominee – Best Original Song
THE MUPPETS
(1:00) 6:15 PG

[illegible] Academy Award Nominations [illegible]
Best Picture & Best Actor – Brad Pitt
MONEYBALL
(1:15) 6:40 PG-13

[illegible] Academy Award Nominations Including Best Picture & Best Actress – Viola Davis!
THE HELP
(3:30) 9:20 PG

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A Screaming Man (92 min., 2010). In French and Arabic with English subtitles. African Film Festival (PFA, 4:30).

The Spies (137 min., 1957). In French with English subtitles. Henri-Georges Clouzot: The Cinema of Disenchantment (PFA, 6:30).

Blog Fang (100 min., 2011). Berkeley Underground Film Society (788 Gilman, Berkeley, 7:00).

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

Scarface (93 min., 1932). Howard Hawks: the Measure of a Man (PFA, 7:00).

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Ihan Way: a Touareg Journey ([illegible] min., 2010). In [illegible] and Tamasheq with English subtitles. Preceded by [illegible] (14 min., 2010). African Film Festival 2012 (PFA, 7:00).

Inside Job (108 min., 2010). Preceded by potluck at 6:30 p.m., followed by discussion. Films of Fact and Life (Humanist Hall, Oakland, 7:30).

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[illegible]

[illegible] (R)
[illegible]

THE DESCENDANTS (R)
[illegible]

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THE ARTIST (PG-13)
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THE DESCENDANTS (R)
[illegible]

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TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY (R)
[illegible]

HUGO 3D (PG)
[illegible]

CARNAGE (R)
[illegible]

[illegible] (PG-13)
[illegible]

YOUNG ADULT (R)
[illegible]

DECLARATION OF WAR (NR)
[illegible]

EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE (PG-13)
[illegible]

SHAME (NC-17)
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[illegible]

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MUSIC

POP GOES KAPOWSKI

An indie band explains its slightly dubious "pop" label.

By Rachel Swan

Kapowski's members are refugees from the free-jazz and experimental music scenes. [illegible]

With three days to go before a rather high-profile gig at the Rickshaw Stop, the four members of local indie pop four-tet Kapowski were just starting to prepare their material: a new arrangement of "Place to Be" from Nick Drake's vastly-underappreciated 1972 album *Pink Moon*. They were gathered in a small Jack London Square rehearsal studio just two blocks away from what appeared to be a pretty raucous indoor rave at the Oakland Metro Operahouse. The band members appeared to have no knowledge of it. The night was cold and quiet on their side of the street, and the studio walls blotted out all ambient sound. Frontman Jesse Rimler sat at a small desktop computer, searching for an audio clip of the Drake song on YouTube. When he found one, he leaned back in his chair, gazing studiously at the black-and-white photo of a then-23-year-old rock star. Guitar arpeggios percolated through the stereo speakers.

"Place to Be" has a very basic chorus-verse structure, but its melody lines are quick and dense. Keyboardist Michael Coleman nodded as he plunked them out on an electric Wurlitzer. Bassist Jon Gondo added scaffolding, while drummer Sam Ospovat scraped the rims of his cymbals. Rimler, who also plays keyboards, closed his eyes as he sang the opening lyric. *When I was younger, younger than before ...* He tapped the beat in triplets on his pant leg.

It would take Kapowski the better part of an evening to get "Place to Be" exactly to its liking, with a shifting rhythm and a few added piano interludes. But the band eventually came up with a rendition that suited its character: bubbly and accessible, and at the same time winkingly abstruse. The Rickshaw Stop gig, which would feature roughly a dozen similarly-themed groups, all playing reinterpretations of songs from *Pink Moon*, not only established Kapowski as being a band of note in the avant-music community — it also showed its niche market.

Coleman, who chafes against terms like "avant," tried to characterize the band in an email. "We are as pop as can be, even though we are weird." But even he might concede that the term "pop" can seem rather contentious.

And it's a strange label to foist on musicians who, for better or worse, are actually refugees from the free-jazz and experimental music communities. Coleman's other projects provide a good sense of his musical pedigree. He used to helm the group Schumann's Humans, whose entire repertoire spawned from 19th-century composer Robert Schumann. As a student at Oberlin College, he also played in a noise-rock band called Screaming Death Machine, which had the audacity to cover Mahler's *Ulricht* symphony. A few years ago he and Ospovat launched the indie rock trio Beep! with tUnE-yArDs bassist Nate Brenner. Though they made a valiant effort to break through the art-school mold, their music still sounded incredibly studied and considered by rock standards.

The other members of Kapowski are similarly groomed. Rimler and Gondo attended middle school together in Pleasant Hill, and they've played in bands since then. Rimler says he initially accosted Gondo on a school bus because he thought they were kindred spirits. Which is to say: Gondo wore a perpetual scowl and Rimler thought that being mad at the world was an appealing quality. Not to mention they both suffered from guy angst.

"We were stuffed in the locker side by side," Rimler joked. He nodded toward Gondo, who didn't look up from his bass. "He was really angry," Rimler said.

Evidently, the two of them figured out how to use anger as an artistic muse. They've spent the last decade and a half in various musical collaborations, even though Rimler was never classically trained — he's currently learning to read music from another friend, saxophonist Jacob Zimmerman. Kapowski came about two years ago, originally with Rimler's brother Jacob on drums — the name either derived from *Saved By the Bell* babe Kelly Kapowski, or from comic-book violence bubbles that say things like "BAM," "WHAP," and "KAPOW." ("It's up for debate," Coleman said.) Set up as a piano-bass-drums trio, the project became far more interesting with the addition of Coleman and Ospovat. The two-piano format allowed for plump chords, interlocking melodies, and a much richer texture than you'd normally hear from an indie rock band. Kapowski's new album *Boy Detective* is notable both for its tight songcraft and for the detail in its arrangements. The one thing that Rimler has in common with Nick Drake is that he's able to float over any kind of orchestration, never conscious that his voice is the main element.

Rimler, who is tall, thin, bearded, and bespectacled, and who works as a program coordinator at the Berkeley Jazzschool, is responsible for most of the songwriting in Kapowski. For someone who always learned by rote, and who, by his own admission, was chased out of the music department at UC San Diego, he's a fascinating composer. The songs on *Boy Detective* may use ear-wormy chord patterns and traditional pop structure, but they usually come with at least one or two bizarre adornments — like the gurgling keyboard trill on "Look Alive."

A lot of those frills sound improvised, and it's easy to see why if you ever get a chance to eavesdrop on the band's rehearsal process. Coleman led the run for the Nick Drake tune, playing the melody on his keyboard while Ospovat stared fixedly at his drums. Rimler tapped the downbeats on his leg. Ospovat ran a finger along the edge of his snare, creating a barely discernible atmospheric scratch. Coleman had asked him to set up a weird, shifty polyrhythm that would highlight the static nature of the vocal. After running through the first verse once, they paused to tweak the arrangement. Gondo's bass needed an extra layer of fuzz. Ospovat considered something a little more "percussiony," but also worried about it being "muddy-sounding."

Coleman addressed the group. "I've been on this new trip, where I put everything in, and then I take everything out — and then I'm left with maybe just two things," he said matter-of-factly. The others nodded, apparently used to conversing in abstract terms. Rimler later explained how they've implemented this process of saturation and condensation. "I generally come in with the initial idea for a song, and a few parts and lyrics," he wrote in an email. "Then we arrange it together as a group." That's where the rococo flourishes come in — an added blues run, a cymbal scrape, or Coleman getting inside a grand piano and plinking the strings with his fingers. The musicians blend all their ideas together, then begin the process of whittling and refining in the studio. By the time they perform the material live, everything is fully conceived and stripped down to a lean finish, Rimler said. Save for one keyboard solo on the song "A Gathering Man," they seldom improvise.

Perhaps that's what makes Kapowski a pop band, albeit a somewhat arty pop band. Or perhaps it's Rimler's influences, which include such older-style Tin Pan Alley songwriters as Cole Porter and George Gershwin, along with their lesser-known descendants — English rocker Ray Davies, pianist Randy Newman, the late Judee Sill. Like Kapowski, they all fall under the broad "pop" category, he indicated. Even if they weren't that popular. ●

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

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CAPCOM VERSUS HIP-HOP

A video game company pits nerds against rappers with its strangely conceived product launch

By Rachel Swan

David Banner and Qbert at Capcom

There's one thing that really distinguishes a hip-hop concert put on by the video game company Capcom from other kinds of stage performances: hardly anybody comes to see the actual show. It doesn't matter how good the lineup is, or how swank the sound system is, or how much attention is put into lighting and choreography at Mezzanine, one of the hipper mid-size clubs in San Francisco's SOMA district.

This year's edition of Capcom's "Fright Night" featured famed Mississippi rapper David Banner, alongside DJ Qbert, The Alchemist, Dan the Automator, and Murs from Living Legends. That's not just a hat trick, that's a veritable coup. Yet it failed to impress the five hundred or so video game nerds in attendance, none of whom had actually paid to get in. Only a small handful of them gathered at the stage when Banner emerged, and some people scratched their heads perplexedly as the rapper uncorked a bottle of champagne and sprayed it on the front row. Everyone else had their eyes glued to a line of arcade-style video games along the side walls.

Indeed, it was hard to convince most attendees that *Resident Evil Revelations* and *Operation Raccoon City* weren't actually the night's main stars. Especially given that a handful of people had arrived dressed as characters from *Resident Evil* — meaning they wore riot cop helmets, gas masks, and fake radio antennae. There was even an intermission, during which the Japanese game developers introduced their new products via a videotaped announcement projected on the walls and overdubbed in English. David Banner just couldn't compete.

Not that he didn't put forth a valiant effort. "All this pretty shit that I'm doing right now I don't do this shit," Banner confessed, gazing conspiratorially at the crowd. He paused a moment, as though an idea had just occurred to him. "I'll be right back after these commercial announcements," he said, and trotted offstage. Five seconds later he emerged with a new bottle of expensive-looking liquid, actually a thick flask of Patrón tequila. He offered it to a woman in the front row. Half the crowd cheered. The other half stared blankly. In the background, you could hear the clean, swift clacking of toy machine guns, as players tried to annihilate the last surviving zombies of Raccoon City.

Marketing personnel at Capcom, a Japanese video game publishing company with satellites in many major cities, conceived the first hip-hop show/product launch last year. It was, by all measures, a rousing success, albeit with an equally fickle audience. Last year's edition was packed wall-to-wall and even more sharply delineated. Maybe 25 percent of the crowd was there for the hip-hop show. The other 75 percent was there for the video game. Thus, the nerds vastly outnumbered the cool kids.

Which, in its own way, is kind of cool. It's not every day you see David Banner trying to placate an audience that would seem more at home in a Dungeons & Dragons convention. And he pulled out all the stops, doing stage dives, bathing everyone in alcohol, running through the crowd and encouraging us not to snap pictures with our camera phones, perhaps as a form of reverse psychology. When audience members pressed in around him, it still wasn't clear if they realized he's a famous pop star. Perhaps they were just amused by the whole spectacle.

At any rate, the other performers — including DJ Qbert, Dan the Automator, and Murs — didn't fare quite as well, even though they delivered comparably arresting performances. Toward the end of his set, Murs addressed the small handful of women in attendance: "Ladies, there are a lot of video game nerds here, right?"

"There are a lot of *lady* video game nerds, right?"

Audience members looked perplexed. "Bullshit," muttered one dissenter.

Performing for a reluctant audience is always frustrating, and it's perhaps doubly frustrating when you're only the secondary attraction — few people can compete with animated zombies or interactive combat systems. That said, the rappers at Capcom created one of the best hip-hop shows to grace San Francisco in recent memory. The fact that it was so different from a regular hip-hop show only made it better — there weren't any hot groupie chicks or superfluous hype men crowding the stage, and even the paparazzi (or "documentary filmmakers," as they're called in hip-hop) had a minimal presence. In place of the usual entourage, Qbert regaled us with a guest breakdancer, and Dan the Automator incorporated live drums. In terms of production values, Capcom's Fright Night outstripped the hip-hop shows you'd normally pay to see.

The only show that measured up, in fact, was last year's edition, Marvel vs. Capcom, a similar product launch to promote a different series of fighting games (which involved Marvel comic book characters). Ghostface Killah performed at that one, and David Banner hosted. The event drew a much bigger crowd (probably owing to milder weather and a stronger advertising muscle). Also, David Banner, who was more out-of-shape at that time, stopped in the middle to fan himself with a piece of pizza. But only a few people noticed. ●

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CD REVIEWS

DOING THE TIMEWARP

New Crescent City soul, flashback hip-hop, and a tribute to Bill Evans

The Soul Rebels

Unlock Your Mind

The lineage of New Orleans brass band music is a long and rich one, but without young(er) upstarts to pump fresh blood into it, even the most vibrant tradition can slip into decline. No chance of that, thanks to the Soul Rebels, an octet of horns and percussion. They embrace the city's time-honored marching band sound but infuse it with funk, hip-hop, and even metal. (The Soul Rebels opened for Metallica two nights of the veteran band's thirtieth anniversary show at The Fillmore in December, joining in for a closing jam on Metallica's "Seek and Destroy.")

While *Unlock Your Mind* is the Rebels' sixth album, it's the band's first on a major label, and it conveys the breadth of the members' abilities. Purist types may wince: While Crescent City jazz is at the heart of the Rebels' style, there are no overt concessions to roots-consciousness. No renditions of gems by such N'awlins icons as Louis Armstrong or *Sidney Bechet* — The Soul Rebels take hits by Eurythmics and Stevie Wonder ("Sweet Dreams Are Made of This" and "Living for the City," respectively) and transform them into ebullient, strutting party music. ("Sweet Dreams" does, appropriately enough, begin as a solemn dirge.) Allen Toussaint's "Night People" is a tribute to New Orleans R&B history, but horns growl with a soulful swing, and drums crackle with cadences reflecting glorious brass music rituals.

The Soul Rebels seek not to maintain brass band history; they're out to make some history of their own that'll stand with their town's best. (Rounder)

— Mark Keresman

Gangrene (Alchemist and Oh No)

Vodka & Ayahuasca

Imagine shuttling inside a fashionably decorated time warp and you get some idea of what hip-hop sounded like in 2011. While Action Bronson and Roc Marciano were antiquating themselves with clearly retrograde boom bap, Alchemist made a record distinctly about the future, tapping longtime creative muse Oh No for *Vodka & Ayahuasca*.

One caveat: The future sketched out on *Vodka & Ayahuasca* — made under the group's collaborative moniker *Gangrene* — is a horrid, disembodying nightmare, culminating in a post-apocalyptic bloodbath. *Crack open your fruit and spill out the prune juice/Drink to sorrow while we calculate your debts*, Oh No hisses on "Dump Truck," which churns violently from Seventies acid-rock arpeggios to low-boiling, *Madvillainy*-style sweeps. The song is not unlike watching *Wolfen* during a particularly visual DXM trip.

As a rapper, Oh No closely resembles the MF Grimm of *The Downfall of Ibliys: A Ghetto Opera*: no phrase is left untamed without a curt little detail like this one from "Drink Up":

Buy dog like Manna Duke/Suckers do what they can, I do what I wanna do. (*I'm a magician with a midget assistant* is another keeper.) The guests, too, are in fine, fiery form. Mobb Deep's chief mouthpiece *Prodigy* breathes heat like nothing had changed since *The Infamous*.

But the real find is Alchemist. Like his brother in arms Just Blaze, the producer-turned-sometime-emcee is now known for his unbecomingly erratic material. Yet he sounds liberated on *Vodka & Ayahuasca*, as if the South American herb referenced in the album's title reawakened him to stirring new possibilities. (Decon)

— M.T. Richards

Chick Corea/Eddie Gomez/ Paul Motian

Further Explorations

Forgive Chick Corea his Scientology devotion and many mediocre fusion discs during the 1970s and 1980s — he's still a tremendous acoustic pianist with a warm, melodious approach. In part to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Bill Evans' classic album *Explorations*, Corea hooked up with two Evans alumni, bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Paul Motian, in May 2010 to record an homage to Evans' legacy at New York's Blue Note.

Aside from his excellence as a jazz pianist, Evans (who influenced Miles Davis while playing in Miles' sextet in the late Fifties) was notable for the way he reconceived the piano trio. Before then, the bassist and drummer more or less accompanied the pianist, who served as a de facto bandleader. Evans developed the concept of all three members being on equal footing improvisation-wise, along with the notion of less-as-more (i.e., leaving spaces that'd be as expressive as the notes played). Corea, Gomez, and Motian embody those principles brilliantly throughout this two-disc set. They perform Evans tunes, standards associated with him, and a few originals. The collective composition "Off the Cuff" is a simmering-to-boiling hard bop that nonetheless maintains Evans' sublime methodology. What's fascinating is the way this threesome takes on the Thelonious Monk standard "Little Rootie Tootie" — their interpretation of Monk's spiky, oblique lyricism is like a splash of freezing cold water when the measured, stately feature Corea appreciation "Bill Evans." The late Motian (he passed in November 2011) was to percussion what Evans was to the keyboard — an impressionist, and Gomez plays with prodigious technique and deepest subtlety. Aces back-to-back, this is. (Concord)

— Mark Keresman

LOCAL LICKS

BY [illegible]

Caitlin Glennon

Hard Learned Truths

The audible "Oh shit!" that opens Caitlin Glennon's new album — presumably uttered by drummer Harland Burkhart, who may or may not have experienced technical difficulties with his ride cymbal — gives it an air of haphazardness that doesn't really befit the bandleader. She's actually a careful, methodical artist with a folksinger lilt and a cache of scrappy rock riffs that bring out — or jar with — the sweet tincture of her voice. It's a fascinating juxtaposition. (self-released)

Dave Smallen

Happiness

Seldom does a lyricist get as deep in the muck as former Street to Nowhere frontman Dave Smallen, even in the world of sensitive singer-songwriters. Take the title track of his new album, which has the offhanded, conversational tone of a diary entry. There's a moment when Smallen talks about driving past a group of kids in East Oakland — all of whom have lived harder, grittier lives than he has — and exchanging a tense, almost voyeuristic gaze. (self-released)

The Y Axes

The Y Axes

It's not clear whether the five members of Y Axes intended for their material to sound uncannily like chip music (i.e., songs composed on video game consoles), but the simple chord changes and burpy keyboard lines definitely give it Pac Man sheen. It's cute in a fantastically low-tech way, and so are Alexa Belchere's vocals, even if she strains to hit the high notes. (Amplified Soul Records)

Beeda Weeda

Bass Rock Fables: The Leak

It's hard not to have high expectations for any mixtape that bears the Too $hort imprimatur, particularly when you look at the cast of guests and see local glitterati like E-40, Shady Nate, and J. Stalin. Beeda Weeda offers a disclaimer at the beginning, reminding us that it's just a prokaryote version of a forthcoming album — hence the on-the-cheap beats. The tape isn't half bad, though, especially if you're into hustling. It's pretty much the inverse of Dave Smallen's album. (Clear Label Records) ●

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THURS. JAN. 26 [illegible] ADV & DOOR DOORS 8 SHOW 8:30
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GARRY [illegible] & THE BLACK DRAGON FIGHTING SOCIETY

FRI. JAN. 27 $16 ADV/$19 DOOR DOORS 8 SHOW 9
MATT SMITH
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WED. FEB. 1 - $[illegible] ADV/$ [illegible] DOOR DOORS 8, SHOW 9
V-NASTY

THURS. FEB. 2 $17 ADV/$ [illegible] DOOR DOORS 7:30 [illegible]
AN EVENING WITH
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FRI. FEB. 3 $20 ADV/$20 DOOR DOORS 7:30 SHOW 8:30
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SAT. FEB. 4 $24 ADV/$2[illegible] DOOR DOORS 8, [illegible]
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SAT. JAN. 28 $18 ADV/$20 DOOR DOORS 8 SHOW 9
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THURS. FEB. 2 [illegible] ADV/$22 DOOR DOORS 7:30 SHOW 8:30
(also at Slim's on Fri. 2/3)
SECRET CHIEFS 3
DENGUE FEVER

FRI. FEB. 3 $[illegible] ADV/$[illegible] DOOR DOORS 8 SHOW 9
[illegible] PRESENTS
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BATTLEBORN
DUB HOP [illegible]

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CONCERTS & CLUBS

THURSDAY 26

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

The Mahones Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $20.50-$22.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Jazz Weekend Band [illegible] show, High Street Station Cafe, 6 p.m., $10-$20

[illegible] [illegible] with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 8 p.m., [illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] Lighthouse, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] with the [illegible] Trio [illegible], 8 p.m., $20

Rock & Pop

The Adicts with [illegible] and [illegible], Oakland Metro Operahouse, 8 p.m., $14

Dave Hurley piano covers of classics, oldies, jazz, & pop, Peter's Restaurant, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] plays [illegible] Punk Piano Disco Volante, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Eli's Mile High Club, 9 p.m.

The [illegible] [illegible] Sports Bar, 10 p.m., free

The [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Dave Club, 9 p.m., $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] with [illegible] Starry Plough, 8 p.m., $6-$10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Only You with [illegible], Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $8-$10

[illegible] & The [illegible] [illegible] & Room, 8 & 10 p.m., $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] live jazz, [illegible], 7:30-11 p.m., free

[illegible] with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 6-9 p.m., free

[illegible] Sweet Harvest, 6:30 p.m.

The [illegible] Le Colonial, 7-10 p.m., free

[illegible] San Francisco-based [illegible] performs live jazz and [illegible] Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 p.m., $10

[illegible] with [illegible], and [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $8

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] Lounge, 8 p.m., $10

[illegible] Weekend The [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $22.50

[illegible] with [illegible] and The [illegible] Society, Slim's, 8:30 p.m., $13

[illegible] with [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $12-$13

[illegible] Tribute Night featuring members of The [illegible], Paula Frazer, [illegible] City, [illegible], and The [illegible], 6 p.m.

[illegible] with [illegible] Weather, Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m., $10

[illegible] & the [illegible] with [illegible] Jr. and [illegible], The Regency Ballroom, 6 p.m., $23

[illegible] & [illegible] with [illegible] Society and [illegible], 8 p.m., $7

[illegible] with [illegible], 8 p.m., $8

[illegible] with [illegible] and The Sword, 8 p.m., $7

[illegible] [illegible], 10 p.m., $15

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Alabama [illegible] with [illegible], The Independent, 9 p.m., $18

The Family [illegible] with [illegible], and more (The [illegible] Benefit), [illegible] 9 p.m., $55-$70

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] [illegible], 9:30 p.m., free

Flamenco Thursdays traditional music & dancing with [illegible] & [illegible], Peña Pachamama, 8 p.m., $12

FRIDAY 27

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] original songs, La Peña Cultural Center, 8 p.m., $18-$22

[illegible] with [illegible] Ensemble, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $20.50-$22.50

[illegible] featuring [illegible], [illegible], Carlos Salgado, Sugar Ray [illegible] and Little Charlie Baty, Yoshi's [illegible], 8 & 10 p.m., $20-$30

[illegible] [illegible] Cafe, 7:30 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

[illegible] [illegible] Paramount Theatre, 8 p.m., $19-$80

[illegible], East Bay Symphony with [illegible], Paramount [illegible], 8 p.m., $15-$70

[illegible] [illegible], Mills College Concert Hall, 8 p.m., $15, $12

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

East Bay [illegible] Band [illegible], 8 p.m., $5

Larry [illegible] Trio Raphael's Studio Cafe and Espresso Bar, 7 p.m., free

[illegible] dinner jazz with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $15, $12

[illegible] 57th Street Gallery, 8:30 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], The [illegible], [illegible] and special guests, The [illegible], 10 p.m., $8

[illegible] with [illegible] & [illegible] and Ladies & Gentlemen, Starry Plough, 8:30 p.m., $8

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] Shelter and [illegible], [illegible] Club, 8 p.m., $8

Dave Hurley piano covers of classics, oldies, jazz, & pop, Peter's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] Band High Street Station Cafe, 7 p.m., $10-$18

[illegible] with The [illegible], and [illegible], Eli's Mile High Club, 7 p.m.

The [illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] and Younger Lovers, 924 Gilman, 7 p.m., $10

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], 1-2-3-4 Go, [illegible], 7 p.m.

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] & The AllStars [illegible], 8:30 p.m., [illegible]

[illegible] of [illegible] Village, The [illegible], 9 p.m., $20-$25

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] & The [illegible] Ashkenaz, 9:30 p.m., $12, $15

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

The [illegible] [illegible] & [illegible] p.m., $24

[illegible] with [illegible], Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $8-$12

[illegible] with [illegible], Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $30

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m.-midnight, free

& [illegible] featuring [illegible], The [illegible] Party and [illegible], Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $12

[illegible] Simple [illegible] Cafe, 7:30 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Trio live jazz, [illegible], 8-11:30 p.m., free

[illegible] [illegible] Top of the Mark, 8 p.m., $12

[illegible] with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 6-9 p.m., free

[illegible] Sweet Harvest, 6:30 p.m.

[illegible] Trio [illegible] & [illegible], 8:30 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with The [illegible] Orchestra and [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $12

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] plus DJ [illegible] and [illegible], 8 p.m., $10-$12

[illegible] & The [illegible] with [illegible] Jr. and American [illegible], The Regency Ballroom, 8 p.m., $23

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], 9:30 p.m., $6

Matt [illegible] with Mike Park and Vitto, Slim's, 8 p.m., $16

The [illegible] with [illegible], The Independent, 9 p.m., $20

[illegible] with The [illegible], The Rumble Strippers, and [illegible], Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m., $12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] [illegible] Room, 9:30 p.m., $15

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Amnesia, 9 p.m., $7-$10

[illegible] featuring members of Fela Kuti and Afrika 70, [illegible] Room, 10 p.m., $10, $12

[illegible] The Warfield, 9 p.m., $35-$65

SATURDAY 28

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] with [illegible] & The [illegible], [illegible] and The [illegible] Band, plus special guests, The [illegible], 8 p.m., $8

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] dinner show, High Street Station Cafe, 7 p.m., $10-$18

[illegible] with [illegible], Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $24.50-$26.50

Mark [illegible]'s [illegible], featuring Charlie Musselwhite, Billy Boy Arnold, Carlos Salgado, Sugar Ray [illegible] and Little Charlie Baty, Yoshi's [illegible], 8 & 10 p.m., $20-$30

[illegible] Family Singers [illegible], Starry Plough, 8 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

[illegible] an afternoon with the East Bay Opera League, Plymouth United Church of Christ, 2 p.m., [illegible]

[illegible] Philharmonic Orchestra [illegible] Piano [illegible] No. 2 and [illegible] Symphony No. 1 with conductor [illegible] and pianist [illegible], Zellerbach Hall, 8 p.m., $30

Experimental & Avant-Garde

[illegible] with [illegible] and the [illegible] Ensemble, [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $15-$30

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] 57th Street Gallery, 8:30 p.m., $15

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PICKS

9th Annual Cheshire Rock Opera

Alice's penchant for traveling through looking glasses, falling down rabbit holes, and eating psychedelic mushrooms isn't the only reason she's been a consummate pop culture muse since the Victorian age. She's also beloved simply for having a rebellious spirit. By all appearances a sweet blond in ruffly knickers and a pinafore, Alice nonetheless refused to play by societal rules. She couldn't be tamed by stiff clothing, children's primers, or even a hostile Queen of Hearts. Thus, it's little surprise she's embraced by the underground arts community in Oakland. One of Alice's more devout local followers, a musician named Sean Lee, put together a "full-immersion" celebration of *Alice in Wonderland* back in 2004, complete with a costumed tea party, a dance competition, and themed songs. The event had enough fairytale cachet to draw a following and ensure real longevity. This year's ninth iteration will feature acrobatics by Wanderlust Circus, plus a "Queen's Concert" with several musical guests, including Thee Hobo Gobbelins. It happens at Oakland Metro Operahouse (630 3rd St., Oakland) on Friday, Jan. 27. 8 p.m., $12 for those wearing Wonderland costumes, $15 for everyone else. OaklandMetro.org. — *Rachel Swan*

Megaton Leviathan

With a name like Megaton Leviathan, it's safe to assume that this band plays heavy music. But the Portland band (Andrew James and Chris Berg, plus assorted guests) goes beyond just colossal, ear-shattering riffs (though there is that). It's also laced with a kind of oozing psychedelic glaze, producing an ethereal, shoegaze-y take on Neurosis-style heaviness. The band describes its (mostly instrumental) music and live performances in terms more befitting an experience at *Burning Man* (e.g., "magical," "spiritual," "sacred"), which could be a turnoff to metal fans who don't often find themselves twirling naked in the desert. But the band's emphasis on hooks and powerful buildups makes its sound particularly compelling, having captured the attention of fellow [illegible] bands, Northwest heavyweights Wolves in the Throne Room, who they toured with last year. With the band's visual display, expect Megaton Leviathan's performance at Eli's Mile High Club (3629 Martin Luther King Blvd., Oakland) on Thursday, Jan. 26, to be transcendent. 6 p.m., ticket price TBA. ElisMileHigh.com — *Kathleen Richards*

Leigh Tysse

Alabama Shakes

The Alabama Shakes have a sound that's universally appealing: sweet, soulful, distinctly American. The Southern four-piece came out of nowhere at the end of 2011, crawling out of the woodwork of Bandcamp with a sizzling debut. The band was quickly hooked up for sessions and lauded by major outlets like MTV and NPR, and now on its first trip to the West Coast, it's already packing concert halls. Fronted by the Gibson SG-wielding vocal powerhouse Brittany Howard, the Shakes run the gamut of American genres, drawing from slave songs, blues, Motown, all the way up to newer soul. And at only four tracks, the band's self-titled debut EP packs a massive punch. Opener "Hold On" is a propulsive personal anthem, while "You Ain't Alone" is a touching, slow-building ballad in which Howard channels the unmistakable emotion of James Brown. In between is a constantly evolving collage of Motown soul and gospel refrains. At The Independent (628 Divisadero St., San Francisco) on Thursday, Jan. 26. 8 p.m., $18. TheIndependentSF.com — *Will Butler*

Punk Rock Joel's Birthday Party

Think of [illegible] Jan. 27's Gilman show as a look into the past, present, and future of local punk: First, you've got long-running, well-[illegible] punk rockers The Phenomenauts — a favorite of every checkered Vans-wearing child of Berkeley in the late Nineties and early 2000s — as well as their newest side project-reincarnation, the Starred-Its, which also includes members from another local legend, Nothing Cool. Then there's incendiary Oakland queercore act The Younger Lovers, plus the band that basically founded the genre some ten years earlier: Pansy Division, and the bill's rounded out by Berkeley upstarts Emily's Army, which features none other than Joey Armstrong, son of Green Day's *Billie Joe*. Fitting that it's actually a birthday party for longtime 924 Gilman fixture Punk Rock Joel, which also means there'll be free cake. You have basically no excuse not to go. At 924 Gilman, (924 Gilman St., Berkeley). 8 p.m., $10-$12. 924Gilman.org — *Ellen Cushing*

Leah Tysse

There was a point when local soul and gospel singer Leah Tysse billed herself as "hot and spicy," but since then she seems to have calmed down and adopted a more serene, sedate persona. In truth, though, any honest balladeer with a voice as strong and a demeanor as sweet as Tysse's could re-christen her persona whenever she saw fit. This year, she's released a new solo album, *Love Again*, which includes a superlative cast of Bay Area musicians — among them keyboardists Sundra Manning and Mike Blankenship, guitarist Errol Cooney, and bassist Eric "Pitbull" Smith. It kicks off with an immediately catchy blues tune, "Hope Is Rising," which sets the tone and establishes the singer's church roots. Tysse will appear at Disco Volante (347 14th St., Oakland) on Saturday, Jan. 28. 9 p.m., free. DiscoVolanteOakland.com — *R.S.*

Jaiz & Joy Lame of Joy 5:30 p.m., free
Michelle Rappaport Piedmont Piano Company. 8 p.m., $17
Red Dibble dream bop with guest colonist singers. The Alley 9 p.m., free
Vino Vinoooo Yoshi's, 8 p.m., $10

Kids

Los Amiguitos de La Peña Saturday morning children's show with live bands. La Peña Cultural Center. 10:30 a.m., $6, kids $4

Rock & Pop

Exposation with War of Agression, Bloodshot and Exsisted, and Art of Chaos, Eli's Mile High Club. 7 p.m.
Owen Hinsley piano covers of classics, ballads, jazz, & pop, Peter's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free
Ofscene with The Range of Light Wilderness and Cigil Index, Starry Plough, 8:30 p.m., $7-$10
Ge Kart Mesart with Caitlan Saylor and Okay Jane, Actual Cafe, 7 p.m., free
Roll On Abbotts with The Forever Plaid Band, Rosha, and Rock'n'Roll Villains Society, Stork Club, 8 p.m., $5
Conk Hyum Disco Volante. 9 p.m., free
Roll Ember Continental Club, 8 p.m., $10
Sacred Relch with Attitude Adjustment, Me Crane, Midnight Chorus, My Victim, and Contend The Wide, Oakland Metro Operahouse, 8 p.m., $27
Tumbleweed Wanderers with Tin Tin Ngga, Lotus Moons, Mermaids Mountain, and Guitar Wizards of the Future. 924 Gilman, 7 p.m., $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Add Mass with System Rebel, Shameh Bowl Live, 8 p.m., free
DJ Gull D Timmy's Locker, 8 p.m., free
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Last year, over 80 Bay Area bands participated, and the movement is quickly growing!

To participate or learn more, visit our website:
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On March 24, the *Express* will host a celebratory listening party where one track from every album completed is played.
RPM Listening Party
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C&C

Berkeley Performing Arts, 10:30 p.m., 1:15 [illegible] $10 [illegible]

Boca do Rio with D'Amico, [illegible], benefit, Ashkenaz, 9 p.m., $10 and up

[illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] Restaurant, 8 p.m., $15-$12

Indodas with Fabiolina Balbia, La Peña Cultural Center, 8 p.m., $13-$15

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Earl Thomas & The Blues Ambassadors Biscuits & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $22

Indodas Last Doggetts Saloon, 9-11 p.m., free

[illegible] band with Fog Opa and Gregory James Band, Bottom, 8 p.m., $7-$10

Jesse Brooks with The Honey Beeson (closing set) and Richard Pohs and the Saffron Bon-[illegible], Hotel Utah, 9 p.m., $8

Birthright of Heroes Paisan folk music with Sheri Mignano, Caffe Trieste, 10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., free

The Hewitt Brothers with Sarah & Christian Dugas, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ana Mendoza Trio live jazz, Ana Mandara, 8-11:30 p.m., free

Eddie [illegible] Ball with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m., free

George Michalski Scott Howard, 6:30 p.m.

Threaded Faces Ball multimedia [illegible] review, [illegible], 8 p.m., $20

Rock & Pop

Birdmonster with [illegible] and [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 10 p.m., $12

[illegible] with [illegible] Wizard [illegible], 9 p.m., $5

Fanie And The Brains Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m., $5, $8

[illegible] with Ozzy Alex and Haunted By Heroes, Slim's, 9 p.m., $13

Humanix with Los Amardeans and The Chrysalis, Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., $8

Frankenstein Lips with [illegible] (happy hour show), Thee Parkside, 3 p.m., free

O.A.R. The Fillmore, 8 p.m., $38.50

Outdoorsmen with FM Landmine [illegible], The Sensitive Side, and [illegible], Hemlock Tavern, 8 p.m., $6

The Plague of Jugglers with [illegible], The Independent, 9 p.m., $20

Sea Dramas with [illegible], Make-Out Room, 7:30 p.m., $8

[illegible] Ranger with [illegible] Bottom [illegible] 9 p.m., $8

Thee Lips with [illegible] Johnson, 9 p.m., $7-$10

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Bounce [illegible] Boom Room, 9 p.m., $15

Superdrive with Worthy, Little John, and [illegible], Public Works, 8 p.m., free before 10 p.m.; $5-$10 after

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Will Magid's [illegible] Party: Folk Funk Extravaganza featuring [illegible] Kat [illegible] and every [illegible], Café du Nord, 8:30 p.m., $15

SUNDAY 29

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Americana Unplugged Jupiter, 1 p.m., free

Jimmy's All-Star Super Diamond Jimmy hosts a different blues band every week, Pete's Restaurant, 5 p.m., free

Mark Hummel's [illegible] Blowout featuring Charlie Musselwhite, Billy Boy Arnold, Curtis Salgado, Sugar Ray Norcia, and Little Charlie Baty, Yoshi's Oakland, 6 & 8 p.m., $20-$30

The Newly Respectable High Street Bosque Café, 3 p.m., $5-$15

[illegible] Morning [illegible] with [illegible], Caffe Mediterraneum, 11 a.m., free

Tony [illegible] with Paul [illegible], Paul An[illegible], and Panique, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $20.50-$22.50

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Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Renae Rodriguez Wheeler Auditorium, 7 p.m., $32

Theories Under Experiment 57th Street Gallery, 8 p.m., $7-$10

Gerla Jazzschool, 4:30 p.m., $10, $12

Jazz and R&B Night Tommy's Locker, 6-10 p.m., free

The Restaurant Jazz Quartet classic & contemporary jazz, Coffee Mill, 3-6 p.m., free

Loop! [illegible] Cafe Van Kleef, 9 p.m.

[illegible] Piedmont [illegible] Company, 4 p.m., $20

The [illegible] Trio Rolla's Lounge, 6:30-11 p.m., free

Terrance Burkes Trio Mezzo Restaurant & Bar, 6:30-9 p.m., free

Kids

Silly Sundays Ashkenaz, 3 p.m., $4-$6

Rock & Pop

Kelly McFarling with [illegible], 7 p.m., free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Avanija music and poetry benefit, to get Avanna a wheelchair van, La Peña Cultural Center, 7 p.m., $10-$25

SambWorks band recitals, Ashkenaz, 5 p.m., $15

Kwest Plus The New Parish, 9 p.m., $20, $22

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Stan Diamond Fillups Thee Parkside, 4 p.m., $10

Jesse [illegible] with The [illegible], The Independent, 8 p.m., $12-$18

Songwriter Sundays rotating [illegible] host [illegible] the Lounge, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m.-midnight, $3

Tony Americana Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Ensemble [illegible]'s "[illegible]" featuring the music of Handel, [illegible] and [illegible], San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 8 p.m., $10-$20 suggested donation

[illegible] cellist, playing works by Debussy, Piazzolla, [illegible] and [illegible], San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 2 p.m., $37

[illegible] Brunch [illegible] piano for Sunday brunch, Top of the Mark, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., $58 for brunch plus gratuity and tax

Gospel & Vocal

Gospel Brunch with Future Perfect & [illegible] giants, 1300 on Fillmore, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m., $39, includes brunch

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] of the Day Sunday [illegible] Bottom [illegible], 8 p.m., $20-$30, [illegible] and show

Kurt [illegible] Trio The [illegible], 7:30-10:30 p.m., free

[illegible] & [illegible] featuring [illegible] Sam [illegible], & [illegible], Dogpatch [illegible], 4:30-8:30 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

Just Just Just with [illegible] Songs and The Suggies, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $6

Brenda [illegible] CD release, with Black [illegible] and The Nice Guy Trio, Cafe du Nord, 8:30 p.m., $12

[illegible] with Avery Miller and The Sentimentals, The Make-Out Room, 7:30 p.m., $8

Native Melodies plays a set [illegible] Talking Heads, with [illegible] Measures, Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 8 p.m., $6

[illegible] with White [illegible] The [illegible], 8 p.m.

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] and The [illegible] [illegible] Boom Room, 9:30 p.m., $5

MONDAY 30

EAST BAY

All Ages

Ellis Island Old World Folk Band [illegible], new and old world Yiddish/Jewish music, Kensington Library, 7 p.m., free

Blues, Folk & Country

"Uptown Hubba Hubba" live burlesque with Hubba Hubba Revue, The Uptown, 9 p.m., $5

Classical & Opera

Mozart Birthday [illegible] Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 7 p.m., $8.50-$10.50

Experimental & Avant-Garde

[illegible] the solo electronic work of [illegible], Mills College Ensemble [illegible], 7:30 p.m.

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Lady [illegible] presented by the SF [illegible] American Jazz Festival, Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $13, $18

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Hot Club of [illegible] with [illegible] the Farm Band, [illegible], 8 p.m., $20

Irish [illegible] [illegible], 9 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Le Jazz Hot Le Colonial, 7 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] featuring Primary Colors, Creep Photo, [illegible], and [illegible], [illegible] of the Hill, 8:30 p.m., free

[illegible] Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] & Miyagi with The Fresh, The Independent, 8 p.m., $13-$15

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Café du Nord, 8 p.m., $12

[illegible] with [illegible] and Frank [illegible], Elbo Room, 9 p.m., $5

TUESDAY 31

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country [illegible] Night with [illegible], [illegible] Bar & Grill, 7:30-11 p.m., free

[illegible] Pete's Restaurant, 7:30-9 p.m., free

[illegible] Night Live Music This week: [illegible], [illegible] Caffe & Bar [illegible], 7 p.m., $8 [illegible]

Gospel & Vocal

Jesus Harmony Chorus and Chorus Orchestra Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, 7:30 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Eddie Pasternak Duo with [illegible] Café Rouge, 6:30 p.m., free
Jazzschool Tuesdays featuring students from the Berkeley music school, Jupiter, 8 p.m., free
Randy Craig Trio Caffe Trieste, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free
Ben Ohmes tenor jazz and guest cabaret singers, The Alley, 9 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

G. Hamilton with So Quartet, X-Ray Press, and Trollyville, Eli's Mile High Club, 9 p.m., $8
Wilco with Whitney, Fox Theater, 8 p.m., $45

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

The Blue Candle spoken word event with comedy and DJs, Dorsey's Locker, 7 p.m., free
Groovegrass Jupiter, 9 p.m., free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

BandWorks band recitals, Ashkenaz, 1:30 p.m., $6
Bluesey Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $[illegible]

SAN FRANCISCO

All Ages

Stompy Jones Verdi Club, 9:30 p.m., $10

Blues, Folk & Country

Marianne Dissard with Chasing Kings, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $8
Song Session with Steve Norton & Friends, Plough and Stars, 9 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Dianne Tendre playing soft jazz piano, Top of the Mark, 8:30-11:30 p.m., $5-10
Tuesday Night Jump! Stompy Jones plays retro jazz plus a swing dance lesson, Verdi Club, 8 p.m., $10-$12

Rock & Pop

Otago's Umbrella Park Chalet Garden, 6:30 p.m., free
Cabbage Bloom with Moonbolt, Hemlock Tavern, 9 p.m., $5
Plastic Villains with Brightlighters and The Paranoids, Elbo Room, 9 p.m., $8
Ghost Blues with Hotel Of British Shadows and Eat Drag, Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Boombox with 2MEX, Neck of the Woods, 9 p.m., $10
The Brownsvile Orchestra presents "Funk Yeah!" Boom Boom Room, 9:30 p.m., $5

WEDNESDAY 1

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Carolyn Wonderland Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $16
Martyn Joseph Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $16.50, $18.50
Whiskey Brothers old time and bluegrass, Albatross Pub, 8 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Bob Lowe & the Sound Wave Hotel Oakland, 8-10 p.m., free
Jazz Wesley Performances: Music with Earl Stevens 17th Street Gallery, 6-8 p.m.
Live Duo Townhouse Bar & Grill, 7:30 p.m., free
Red Ghost dance jazz with guest cabaret singers, The Alley, 9 p.m., free
Will Stevens piano music, Campo di Bocce, 6-9 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Rattling Womens Stork Club, 9 p.m., $5
Dave Tinsley piano tunes of classics, oldies, jazz & pop, Peter's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free
KALX 90.7 FM Presents: Big Thief This week: The Tenderlions, Gypsy Moonlight, Wave Radio Keys, and Ghost Town, The Uptown, 5:30 p.m., free
Soft Jones with Weakend, The New Parish, 9 p.m., $12, $15
Wave with White Denim, Fox Theater, 8 p.m., $45

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Ghost 8 West Velvet, 8 p.m., free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Caribbean Night with Reggae Flash and DJ Mestiza, Dorsey's Locker, 7-11 p.m., free
Ghost Foods with Ivoyte and Brina, Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m., $15, $20

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Bluegrass Country Jam w/ Jeanie & Chuck, Plough and Stars, 9 p.m., free
Wee Saints & The Highlands Biscuits & Blues, 6 & 9 p.m., $20
Terry Barrington Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Trio di Dimore playing works by Jupiter, Poulenc, Stravinsky, J.S. Bach, and C.P.E. Bach, Jones cabaret, 8 p.m., $30

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ben Marcato and the Mondo Chorus Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 p.m., $10
DiskDiskDisk with Goodnik & Dianne Abraham, Amnesia, 7 p.m.
Dianne + at the Wave Marion Session, Amnesia, 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

The Goodfellers with Tree Mad North, Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $8
Bloomer Pilot with Shaddown, Hear The Sirens, and The Slight Corporation, Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., $8
The Drift with Sean Smith Trio and Solyn Sone, Elbo Room, 8 p.m., $8
Emperor X with Jon Barba and more, Hemlock Tavern, 8 p.m., $8
Ghost with Music Ceremony and Ancient Brothers, Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $13, $15
Kapowski with Marshalls and Bells, Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $10
The Hoarfin with Warren Tuggerson & The Good Grief and Shaddown, Mario Bros & Mortar Music Hall, 8 p.m., $6, $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Ocean Way Dianne Jones Jones Room, 9:30 p.m., $5
Marcelo Kessler Jones party with Billy Magic Phenomenator Wendell "Get Down" Fund Mobile, and Kevin "The Wizard" Wang, Jones Jones Room, 9:30 p.m., $5
Doggie Riddle + Orchestra & Gates, The Comedy Mezzanine, 8 p.m., $25
K. Ready Slim's, 8 p.m., $16

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Freddy Exodo and la Banda Latin flamenco, Mediterranean & contemporary folk, Blue Performance, 8 p.m., $12 ◆

Submissions for music listings should be emailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA, 94607. Deadline is fourteen days prior to the event date.

Ashkenaz
Music & Dance Community Center

WED 1/25 9:00 pm $19 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT **STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL** 8 pm Broadcast of "Dead to the World"

THU 1/26 8:30 pm $6 — OPEN MIC **SONGWRITERS' OPEN MIC** featuring Graham Patzner

FRI 1/27 9:30 pm $15 $12 [illegible] — REGGAE **ABJA & THE LIONS OF RUSH**

SAT 1/28 9:00 pm $10-up sliding scale — BRAZILIAN RHYTHMS FOR THE RIVER **ROCA RORIO Z'AMICO** Benefit for InfoAmazon

WED 2/1 9:30 pm $20 $15 advance — REGGAE **CHUCK FENDA I WAYNE IKRONIK**

THU 2/2 9:00 pm $19 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT **STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL**

FRI 2/3 8:30 pm $18 $12 [illegible] — ROOTS BLUES SOUL **CALIFORNIA HONEYDROPS** Best Band in Express readers' poll, 9 pm dance lesson

SAT 2/4 8:30 pm $18 — COMMUNITY BENEFIT **"NICE TIME": Birthday Tribute to BOB MARLEY** with Native Elements, Ashabe, Harry Best, Nyabingh Ensemble, Rusty Zinn, Clinton Mystic Man, Sweetbeat, Manu Maddy, Pat Navarro, Honeo Mounts, Joe [illegible] more! A benefit for Ashkenaz!

SUN 2/5 3:00 pm $6 $4 kids — "SOGGY SUNDAYS" KIDS' SHOW **ASHERA** Bob Marley birthday celebration!

2/7 ZYDECO FLAMES — 2/9 STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL

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Little Walter Tribute

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YOSHI'S LOCAL TALENT SERIES
FREE Live Music in The Lounge! Every Night 8:30-11 pm
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Wed, Jan 25 [illegible]
THE GARY BARTZ PROJECT w/ BILAL AND ALOE BLACC

Thu-Sat, Jan 26-28
STANLEY CLARKE BAND

Sun, Jan 29 [illegible]
THE ALAN PARSONS LIVE PROJECT + DAVID PACK (OF AMBROSIA)

Wed, Feb 1 [illegible]
THE PETER ERSKINE NEW TRIO

Thurs, Feb 2 [illegible]
THE GOSPEL HUMMINGBIRDS

Thurs, Feb 2 [illegible] Hip-hop [illegible]
SHABAZZ PALACES + SIDDHARTHA

Fri, Feb 3 [illegible]
MARIANNE AYA OMAC [illegible] JOAN BAEZ

Sat, Feb 4 [illegible]
LAVAY SMITH DUKE ELLINGTON TRIBUTE

Sat, Feb 4 (10:30pm)
BOBBY BROOM & THE DEEP BLUE ORGAN TRIO

Sun, Feb 5 [illegible]
BARBARY COAST BURLESQUE

Mon, Feb 6 [illegible]
TRIO M Myra Melford Mark Dresser & Matt Wilson

oakland

Wed Jan 25 SF SKETCHFEST PRESENTS
ANN MAGNUSON DRAWING ROOM APOCALYPSE

Thurs Jan 26
WESLA WHITFIELD w/THE MIKE GREENSILL TRIO

Fri-Sun Jan 27-29
MARK HUMMEL'S BLUES HARMONICA BLOWOUT featuring Charlie Musselwhite, Billy Boy Arnold, Curtis Salgado, Sugar Ray Norcia & Little Charlie Baty

Mon, Jan 30 [illegible]
SF FILIPINO AMERICAN JAZZ FESTIVAL PRESENTS
LADY BIANCA

Tues, Jan 31
[illegible] ROCK & LATIN ROCK, INC PRESENTS
COLORES

Wed, Feb 1 [illegible]
CAROLYN WONDERLAND

Thurs, Feb 2
SF SKETCHFEST PRESENTS
REGGIE WATTS + ROBERT GLASPER THE JAZZ COLLABORATION

Fri-Sun Feb 3-5 [illegible]
THE SPINNERS

Tues, Feb 7 [illegible]
THE PERSUASIONS

Wed, Feb 8 [illegible]
LOS TRAIN WRECK

Thurs, Feb 9 [illegible]
POPLYFE

[illegible]
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DJ & DANCE

THURSDAY 26

EAST BAY

Academy Night w/ DJ and VJ Joe E. spinning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40. White Horse Inn, 9 p.m. $10, Shoulder free w/ valid ID.

Hostile Trample with DJ Ivan Franco The Layover. 10 p.m. free

Bass Fever w/ Sexual Demo Model spinning Hostile, B.Meredith, Shadowsound. Frankie Ford, 10 p.m. free

Boom Clan w/ DJs Kool Karlo & Chris Fox. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free

Delicious Thursdays Radio. 10 p.m. free

DJ Add1 spinning eclectic soul/funky. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free

DJ Hostile The Layover, 9 p.m. free

DJ Mood Radio, 9 p.m. free

Kit Night DJs spinning funktastic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Ray's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m. free

DJ Dana spinning lounge. Levi Weekend Lounge, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. free

International Night Lounge featuring DJ the Jazz spinning Euro-beat, French pop, Bossa film soundtracks, Latin American grooves, story lounge, & exotica. Forbidden Island, 8 p.m. free

Jungle Jungle w/ DJs Robert, Ross Kyle, and Uncle Joe. Luka's spinning B Lounge. 9 p.m. free

Pressure Drop w/ Ron Dubey & Mr. Kyle spinning Jamaican oldies and reggae. The Missouri Lounge. 10 p.m., free

VIP Rock indie pop, mashups, new wave. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

Salsa Night w/ DJ Eddie T plus dance lessons. Tamerin Bar & Grill, 8 p.m. $10

Thirty urban night w/ DJ Ms. Locatrac spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21, 9 p.m. $12-$15

Yoruba Remix Sessions featuring Afro-Carlos Moore and Conti. Remix, 9 p.m. free

FRIDAY 27

EAST BAY

Canela! w/ DJs spinning Latin music. Club 21, 9 p.m. $6-$10

DJ Doc Jupiter, 9 p.m. free

Grooving w/ DJ Ryan. DJ Ryan spinning the hottest music in the Bay Area. White Dove Inn, 9 p.m. $5

"Deejays, Drinks & Dancing" DJ Rang & special guests Shadow. Boss beats for and sleaze. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m. free

DJ Des Hayles The Layover, 6 p.m. free

DJ Sobador's Beirut Gone Happy Hour w/ DJs spinning hip-hop, soul, & funk. Parkway Lounge, 5-8 p.m. free

DJ Pandemonium Actual Cafe, 6-8 p.m., free

Downtempo and quebec w/ rotating DJs. Sushi Groove, 7:30-11:30 p.m. free

Europe w/ DJ Phil The Layover, 10 p.m., free

Friday Night Salsa w/ guest DJs spinning salsa. La Estrellita Cafe, 10 p.m. $8

Friday Nite Dance w/ DJ Sepa K. Finas, 10 p.m. $5

Happy Hours w/ DJ Golden Gyers spinning funk, drink, music, & boots deck. The Missouri Lounge, 6-10 p.m. free

Hip-Hop Remix Memo w/ Remix DJ. Club 1220, 9 p.m. $8

Latin Explosion DJ Jorge Estrope spins cumbia, salsa, merengue, banda, spinning pop, & house. Remix and Bus 9 p.m.-2 a.m. $6-$15

Shadow weekly in-house DJ Bparo. Amoeba Music, 7:30 p.m., free

Mighty Irie DJs Rocker-T, Mo Irie, & Smoke-One spin reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. Luka's spinning & Lounge, 10 p.m. $10

Old-School hip-hop free drink. Radio, 9 p.m. free

Game Night w/ DJ Remix Shadow Hostile, spins salsa, & R&B. Remix Paradise Club, 10 p.m. urban free before 11:30 p.m.

Room Booms Zombie Boom Boom '80s pop night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free

Ima spinning Shadow w/ Roger Mas spinning Lounge, afro-rhythms, exotica, gangsters, salsa, Hostile, reggaeton, & Hostile. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free

Salty Fridays DJ Lash & Kid Rob spin R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival, 8 p.m. $5

Jungle w/ DJ Jams Paypay spinning northern soul, Motown, '60s, mods, punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll. Ruby Room, 10 p.m. free

World Elam Fridays featuring DJ Mojer spinning Afrobeat, soca, exotica, salsa, merengue, dancehall reggae, bhangra, Arabic music, & more. Conga Lounge, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 28

EAST BAY

All Productions & Hostile duo spinning R&B & hip-hop. Room, 10 p.m. free

The Black Yard hosted by Sean Kennedy. Moves Music, 2 p.m. free

Catch a New Dance DJ Bogus spun Hostile, '70s, '80s. Conga Lounge, 10 p.m., free

Club Shadow's The Jerry Ross & Soul Posters spin R&B, soul, funk, reggae, & hip-hop. Maxwell's Lounge, 9 p.m. $10

Club Shadow w/ DJ Rum and guests spinning hip-hop & R&B. Remix bar, free 9 p.m. $8 before 11 p.m.

"Deejays, Drinks & Dancing" DJ Rabit & Lounge dance spinning bass heavy fun and Hostile. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m. free

DJ Night DJs spinning funkadelic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Ray's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m. free

Downtempo and Lounge w/ rotating DJs. Sushi Groove, 7:30-11:30 p.m. free

Superstar Saturday Night w/ Kid mill. White Horse Inn, 8 p.m. $5

House Saturdays Club 1220, 8 p.m. $5

La Onda Loca Latino cowboy night w/ DJs spinning salsa, norteño, & banda, plus go-go vaqueras. Club 21, 9 p.m. $6-$15

Magic Milk Shadow DJ Dana & guests host genre-surfing extravaganza. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m. free

Pop History 101 DJs spin pop hits from the Sixties to Method. Shadow Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. free

Reggae Gold w/ DJs Daddy Rula, Mendoza, Pula Moquet, & guests. New Karibbean City, 10 p.m. $15

Ta-Dow! DJs from the Oakland Faders, Aunefunk, & the Bangout spin Hostile party anthems & future funk. Luka's Sundays & Lounge, 10 p.m. $10

Total Mind Funk w/ Shadow & Radio spinning hip-hop, dance punk, bordeaux & more. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free

Wake-Up w/ DJ Fluid Cat spinning hip-hop, R&B. The Missouri Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free

SUNDAY 29

EAST BAY

3d Gully Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free

King of Kings DJ Smoke-One and guests spin reggae, dancehall, roots, & lovers' rock. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m. $10

La Vasconcita Kenion and Bar, 5 p.m. $6-$8

Mojo w/ DJ Mpemu spinning soul, funk, & Afrocentric old-school. Somar Bar & Lounge, 8 p.m. free

Soul Sanctuary Remix Community dance theme spinal. SoulSanctuaryDance.com. Ashkenaz, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. donation accepted

The Soul-Full Kang DJ Aziz Des & guests spin Shadow grooves. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 8 p.m. free

Uhlife Pan's Ska Sundays DJs spin ska, rocksteady, & early reggae. The Hotsy Totsy Club, 7 p.m. free

MONDAY 30

EAST BAY

Monday Soul featuring DJs D-Sharp, Hostile, The New Forum, 10 p.m. $6

Three-Day Weekend DJ Morocco Slim spinning hip-hop, R&B, & funk favorites. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 8 p.m., free

PICKS

Hot Mess

Oakland is becoming known, increasingly, for its wide-ranging, protean, impressively internationalist DJ dance party scene — we have the most soulful house, the coolest "hella gay" parties, the twitchiest glitchiest electronica and, of course, the deepest bass in our hip-hop. That said, few parties are quite as adventurous as "Hot Mess," a new night helmed by DJs G Star and Pink Narcissus. They promise to blend Hindi pop, Bollywood beats, glitch Dutch house, Moombahton thrill, and a few other styles that seldom grace East Bay sound systems. Based on the sample mixes alone, the event will probably make good on its name — in a positive way, of course. At Bench & Bar (510 17th St., Oakland) on Friday, Jan. 27, 9 p.m., $5. BenchandBar.com — *Rachel Swan*

Vice Cabaret

Burlesque succeeds when it explores both its retro and its campy aspects, and when the performers don't shy away from Carmen Miranda fruit hats or songs made popular by Betty Boop. That's the sensibility of Vice Cabaret, a variety show produced under the auspice of local company Living Cult Burlesque Theatre. The next installment will feature song-and-dance numbers by a clown, an addict, a Bond Girl, and a "Rubenesque" glamazon and several other curvy coquettes. Part DJ dance party, part stage musical, part old-fashioned striptease, this event will also feature celebrity emcees, raffle prizes, and schwag. At Vitus (301 Broadway, Oakland) on Saturday, Jan. 28, 9 p.m. $10. VitusOakland.com — *R.S.*

Underground Lounge psycho '60s & proto 70s music. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

Woman Kang Obi w/ DJ Kilid spinning rock and roll, soft hits, oldies, & soul. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free

Country Remix Night plus line dancing. Club 1220, 8 p.m. free

Kid Night DJs Shadow funkadelic pop, mind-blowing rock, & urban hip-hop. Ray's Restaurant, 9:30 p.m., free

Kit Wooly spinning punk. Levi Weekend Lounge, 9 p.m.-2 a.m. free

Chicago vintage night featuring DJ Speedy B & Kazy. Club 21, 9 p.m., free

Free Night Spins Vinyl Dance session, 9 p.m. free

Roots Fyah DJs Juan & Sonj spinning roots & world beats. Luka's spinning & Lounge, 8 p.m., free

TUESDAY 31

EAST BAY

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FRI 10PM
MIGHTY IRIE
GUEST DJ SEAN G
W/ RESIDENT CREW ROCKER-T SMOKE ONE & IRIE DOLE
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SAT 10PM
SMOOVE SATURDAYS
DJs JAMS & BLACK

SUN 9PM
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MON 9PM
THREE DAY WEEKEND
DJ MOROCCO SLIM
MYSTERY EVERY

TUES 9PM
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LEGAL NOTICES

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
[illegible]
1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
[illegible]
1/4, 1/11, 1/18, 1/25/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
[illegible]
1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/1/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
[illegible]
1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/1/2012

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE # [illegible]
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1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

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1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

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1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/1/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
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Stephen Tanaka Photography
1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/1/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
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1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

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1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
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1/25, 2/1, 2/8, 2/15/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
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1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

Fictitious Business Name Statement
File # [illegible]
[illegible]
1/11, 1/18, 1/25, 2/1/2012

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: [illegible]
Superior Court of California, County of Alameda
1225 Fallon Street
Oakland, CA 94612
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: [illegible]
NOTICE OF HEARING
February 24, 2012 at 9:30 A.M. in Dept. # 31 at 201 13th St. 2nd Floor Oakland CA 94612
[illegible]
Judge of the Superior Court
1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NUMBER: [illegible]
[illegible]
1/18, 1/25, 2/1, 2/8/2012

ANNOUNCEMENTS

[illegible]

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0116845 Title Order No. 11-0097381 Investor/Insurer No. 110009679 APN No. 049-1083-008 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 07/29/2005. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by HARBIR BAL, A MARRIED MAN AS HIS SOLE & SEPARATE PROPERTY, dated 07/29/2005 and recorded 8/23/2005, as Instrument No. 2005360320, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/17/2012 at 12:30PM, At the Fallon Street entrance to the County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612 at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 4300 ADELINE STREET EMERYVILLE, CA, 946083305. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $488,997.13. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 01/19/2012 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281 8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# 4171115 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012, 02/08/2012

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0094013 Title Order No. 11-0075146 Investor/Insurer No. 872255169 APN No. 049-1536-087 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 03/13/2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by JEFFREY S. RUBENSTEIN, dated 03/13/2007 and recorded 3/19/2007, as Instrument No. 2007109547, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/14/2012 at 12:30PM, At the Fallon Street entrance to the County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612 at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 6400 CHRISTIE AVENUE #5206, EMERYVILLE, CA, 94608. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $346,109.50. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 12/10/2011 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281 8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# 4176402 01/18/2012, 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0117418 Title Order No. 11-0097840 Investor/Insurer No. 056220096 APN No. 049-1528-058 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 05/07/2004. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by SHERMAN A. WONG, A SINGLE MAN dated 05/07/2004 and recorded 5/14/2004, as Instrument No. 2004211999, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/16/2012 at 12:30PM, At the Fallon Street entrance to the County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612 at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 4 CAPTAIN DRIVE #E308, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $187,537.29. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made, in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 01/14/2012 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281-8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# 4123970 01/18/2012, 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012

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Navajos, Hózhó, and Track Work
Jay Youngdahl

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NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0117711 Title Order No. 11-0098084 Investor/Insurer No. 11761391 APN No. 049-1531-091 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 11/22/2006. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by GARY KRAMER, AN UNMARRIED MAN dated 11/22/2006 and recorded 12/1/2006, as Instrument No. 2006447957, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/10/2012 at 12:30PM, At the Fallon Street entrance to the County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612 at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 78 EMERY BAY DRIVE, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $352,897.29. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made, in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 01/18/2012 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281-8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# 4177236 01/18/2012, 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0117999 Title Order No. 11-0098194 Investor/Insurer No. 125491670 APN No. 049-1526-253 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 11/23/2005. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by CHRISTOPHER L. FOLEY, AN UNMARRIED MAN, dated 11/23/2005 and recorded 12/6/2005, as Instrument No. 2005519909, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/17/2012 at 12:30PM, At the Fallon Street entrance to the County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94612 at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 6 ADMIRAL DRIVE A290, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $459,611.04. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made, in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 01/18/2012 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281-8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# 4177670 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012, 02/08/2012

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE TS No. 11-0116038 Title Order No. 11-0096602 Investor/Insurer No. 1694701572 APN No. 049-1528-489 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 01/15/2004. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER." Notice is hereby given that RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A., as duly appointed trustee pursuant to the Deed of Trust executed by SAMIR SNAGIC AND ELVIRA SNAGIC, dated 01/15/2004 and recorded 1/23/2004, as Instrument No. 2004029829, in Book , Page), of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County, State of California, will sell on 02/21/2012 at 9:00AM, Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr., Oakland, CA 94612, 2nd Floor Lodge Hall Banquet Room at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash or check as described below, payable in full at time of sale, all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust, in the property situated in said County and State and as more fully described in the above referenced Deed of Trust. The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 6 ADMIRAL DRIVE #B328, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The total amount of the unpaid balance with interest thereon of the obligation secured by the property to be sold plus reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is $229,940.98. It is possible that at the time of sale the opening bid may be less than the total indebtedness due. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept cashier's checks drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Said sale will be made, in an "AS IS" condition, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession or encumbrances, to satisfy the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust, advances thereunder, with interest as provided, and the unpaid principal of the Note secured by said Deed of Trust with interest thereon as provided in said Note, plus fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. DATED: 01/12/2012 RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. 1800 Tapo Canyon Rd., CA6-914-01-94 SIMI VALLEY, CA 93063 Phone: (800) 281-8219, Sale Information (626) 927-4399 By: Trustee's Sale Officer RECONTRUST COMPANY, N.A. is a debt collector attempting to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. ASAP# FNMA4165356 01/25/2012, 02/01/2012, 02/08/2012

SAVAGE LOVE

SURPRISE!

Unkempt asscracks, 23-year-old virgins and Newt's infidelity

By Dan Savage

Have boyfriend. Several months. Love sex. First time we 69, I notice he has a little turtlehead sticking out. You get me? Second time, he has bits of toilet paper stuck in that area. CAN I ADDRESS THIS? And how do I do it without giving him a permanently flaccid penis? I love this man to pieces and know this is a humiliating topic. Please help!

Mired In The Mud

Got you. Wish didn't. But did.

If you don't have the nerve to speak up when someone is grinding shitballs and dingleberries in the vicinity of your nostrils, MITM, I'm not sure there's anything I can say that's gonna help. But for what it's worth:

YES, YOU ADDRESS IT! IMMEDIATELY!

When someone pushes your face into a dirty asscrack — or allows you to place your face in the general vicinity of a dirty asscrack — you say something along the lines of "What the fuck, dude, go take a dump and jump in the shower! Christ!" His ego, to say nothing of his future erections, should be your least concern at a moment like that. So you say it without hesitation, without concern for his feelings, and you say it as you leap out of bed and reach for your shirt, pants, car keys, and phone. You don't just lie there pretending that his buttcrust isn't dangling over your nose. Even if he's never able to get another erection with you, MITM, he'll know to spot-check for cleanliness — are there no washcloths in Gilead? — before he climbs on top of anyone else.

I'm a 23-year-old gay guy. I've been talking to a nice guy who will possibly become my first boyfriend. The little quibble I'm having is: I'm a virgin. It's not that big a deal to me — it just hasn't happened yet — but I was wondering if I should mention it to this guy. He made an aside about virginity (unprompted by me) during one of our chats: "No, I'm not a virgin, that's nothing that you should worry about with me." That was probably my opportunity to tell him, but I didn't. Should I have told him? What if I tell him during sex? Could that make it hot?

Thank you for what you do. I found the courage to come out because of you.

Ready And Willing

If you found the courage to come out to family and friends about being gay — which you found inside yourself, RAW, but thanks for the nice compliment — you can come out to this boy about being a virgin.

Don't tell him during sex, RAW, and don't tell him in a way that makes this relevant information about your sexual history — you don't have one — seem like a character flaw, a cancer diagnosis, or a request for an open marriage six years after you began an adulterous affair with a congressional staffer. You're just a 23-year-old virgin, RAW; there's nothing wrong with you; it's not like you're one of Elizabeth Santorum's slutty gay friends or a cast member of *The A-List: Dallas*. The next time you see this boy, initiate a casual, low-stakes, getting-to-know-you make-out session at a time when you can't transition to full-on, no-holes-barred gay sex. Relax, kiss the boy, be chill. Then pause and inform him that you're not very sexually experienced — in fact, you've never been with anyone. Reassure him that you're not a duckling — you're not going to imprint on the first dick you see — but that you wanted him to know.

Congrats, Dan! It looks like you've got your first high-profile "monogamish" public figure: Newt Gingrich. You must be so proud.

Savage Can't Understand Monogamy

For anyone who spent last week under a rock: Newt Gingrich, brave defender of traditional marriage, was still married to his second wife — and still fucking the consecrated host out of his "devout Catholic" mistress — when he asked his second wife to agree to an open marriage. Newt had been fucking Callista, his devoutly Catholic mistress, for six years when he made the big ask. Newt's second wife wouldn't agree to an open marriage, according to Newt's second wife, which is how she became Newt's second ex-wife and how Newt's mistress became Newt's third wife.

That's not monogamish. That's CPOSish. And lumping honest nonmonogamists — people who don't lie or cheat — in with the likes of the Gingriches and Schwarzeneggers of the world, which whiny and insecure monogamists (not to be confused with reasonable and secure monogamists) are always doing, is simply unfair. Newt, like Arnold before him, didn't succeed at nonmonogamy; he failed at monogamy.

Zooming out for a moment: The Gingrich campaign has presented the wholesome story of Newt and Callista's courtship as a redemption narrative: Newt is a better man today thanks to Callista, he's better suited to be president thanks to Callista, and he's better prepared to defend traditional marriage thanks to Callista. She's been described as a "devout Catholic" in every profile written about her — so devout that her love brought Newt to the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and ever-more-rabidly anti-gay church. So it seems to me that it's fair to ask if Callista knew in advance that Newt was proposing an open marriage to his then wife and approved of the arrangement. (It might be more accurate to say that Newt informed his second wife that she was already in an open marriage and asked if she wanted to remain in it.) Did Callista know about Newt's open marriage proposal? Did Newt bounce the idea off his devoutly Catholic mistress first? Maybe right after he finished bouncing himself off his devoutly Catholic mistress?

This news alters the redemption narrative that the Gingrich camp set before the voters. So questioning Callista about the open marriage proposal — what did the mistress know and when did she know it? — seems like an entirely legit line of inquiry to me.

Callista Gingrich, like her vile husband, doesn't believe that gays and lesbians should be equal under the law because, as a good Catholic, she believes that homosexuality is a sin and that homosexuals should remain celibate. Well, the Catholic Church considers adultery, divorce, and birth control sinful, too. Someone in the liberal media really ought to ask Callista to explain why her faith should place limits on my sexual expression but not her own. ●

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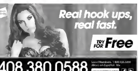

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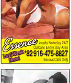
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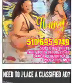
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